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THE CHURCH

AND

THE ERA

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B. FRANKLIN, D.D.

Author of "The Creed and Modern Thought," Etc.

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THE CHURCH AND THE ERA.

A NEW ERA is sweeping across the world. Its direction is westward. The foremost wave of its advancing tide rises high on this continent. The American people are launching their life-ventures upon it with great show of confidence. All they value they are committing to it. They are looking hopefully for grand results. They have strong assurance that it is the tide that leadeth on to fortune. They believe that a better time is coming than any the world has yet seen.

Nor is this confident expectation confined to material hopes. It includes social amelioration in every direction, enlarged political liberty, expansion and enrichment of the minds of the multitudes, accompanied by corresponding high culture of the few, with a final peace—a conquered peace

probably, but stable and persistent—wherein man with mankind will have attained at least equilibrium, and perhaps harmony. In this "good time coming," every human creature, unconfined and unchained, will, it is hoped, evolve after his own individual type; while, through reciprocal respect and consideration, all will work together for the common good.

America was not the birthplace of this idea and energy. It was born among the "liberal-minded" of the old world. There it has alarmed "conservatism" and encountered the hard resistance of established institutions, wherein the ruling powers are enthroned. Repression, therefore, has met it in all paths of progress. Already it has begun to despair, and the tyranny of unreason is supervening, exhibiting itself in the insanity of nihilism.

America has not yet begun to despair. She shows no inclination to despair. Evils are recognized. None are more commonly perceived, and keenly felt, than the apparently irresistible tendency toward the ever-growing wealth of the rich, and the ever-deepening poverty of the poor. These facts, however, are turned into problems, which are sought to be solved by wisdom, in hope

of fair adjustment through law. They are not yet regarded as wrongs, which only force can correct.

Pessimists say that the despair, which in the old world is so grim in its utterances and relentless in its actions, is not yet rife in America, because our populations are not yet dense enough within our territorial and metropolitan centres. When our frontiers cease to be the borders of rich lands unoccupied, and of unwrought mines; when all have been taken up and our fifty millions have swelled into hundreds of millions, then, they say, the circumstances of Europe will be renewed in this country, and the same mad hatred will spring up out of the groaning souls of the masses. These prophets of ill omen may be right, or may be wrong. They are evidently not influential. They scarcely throw the shade of a flying cloud over the serene brilliancy of our national hopefulness. There is in America a firm trust in evolving manliness. Its strong common sense is confided in. Its intelligence is trusted to perceive that disorder seldom cures evil; and that it is better, even more profitable, to endure the slow process of natural recuperation and rational cure, than to risk everything in drastic or dissecting operations

which have no better grounds or reasons than such as rest upon abstract social or political theories.

It cannot be denied that "the spirit of the age" is a spirit of power, and that it is wielding its power with daring, energy, and confidence. It is not remarkable for reverence. It is commonly charged against it, that it is even destitute of reverence. Perhaps it will appear, on closer inspection, only to have changed the objects of its reverence. It certainly does not seem to possess any ostentatious respect for existing institutions. It does not succumb to assumptions of authority, either in church, state, or society. Even the children of the age, both young and old — all who have not overpast the evident need of pupilage, and protection, and guidance — disregard their guides, guardians, and teachers.

Suppose this be allowed and acknowledged as both a present evil and a portent of mischief to come. Shall we attempt its direct repression? Are wayward children, who are too strong to coerce, generally subdued by scolding? Can we hope to check the rush of progress by denouncing its whole spirit and character? Because it has

ceased to revere what it is resolved to reform, can we induce reverence by supporting institutions which it regards as effete, and pursuing methods which it does not approve?

There is one great organization which throws itself directly athwart the course of both modern thought and modern progress. It possesses the power that always accompanies a definite policy sustained by a thorough and well-disciplined order of resolute workers. The Papal Autocracy—known commonly by the name which, conjoined with its assumptions, is self-contradictory, of the Roman Catholic Church—is wealthy and influential in America, and has already numerous adherents. Some of these adherents are native born. Many more are of foreign parentage, who have never entered into sympathy with American ideas. The Americans who have become "Romanists" are not felt as factors in any marked combination that influences at large the working ideas of either religion, politics, or social life. What influence they have is as yet chiefly personal, or at most social, and slightly partisan.

The Papacy itself has not put forth any open efforts to direct, control, or check the course of

American progress. Its adherents are active often in local politics; but the one practical end now in their view is the attainment of public patronage in aid of their educational and beneficent enterprises. With the caution for which it is historically notable, the Papacy avoids open interference in American politics, is tolerant socially, and claims apparently, in morals or religion, only a fair field with common reciprocal liberty. America is not afraid of the Papacy; and the astute managers of papal policy have no foolish intention of arousing her fears.

Still the ruling idea of the "Roman Catholic Church"—the idea, if not ostentatiously avowed yet not concealed, much less denied — is anti-American. It is simply the idea of exclusive authority as opposed to the idea of liberty. Its first corollary is, that the best good both of man and mankind can be effectively attained and conserved by the submission of every person's conscience, judgment, and will to some priestly confessor, who, as representative, concentrates in his official person all the power and grace inherent in the organization that has an infallible head on earth, and to which is committed the power and

duty of blessing or cursing individuals or communities, the latter in time, and the former both for time and all eternity.

It is not designed here to criticise this position of the Roman Church. It has been set forth, intentionally at least, with fairness. The fact only is adduced, that it is a powerful organization, wonderfully constructed in detail and smoothly working in entirety, having one fixed, ruling idea—that of exclusive authority—and one lesson, viz., submission and obedience. Both its idea and lesson reach to the soul. The consistent and devoted Romanist not only submits outwardly, but he gives himself wholly into the hands of his spiritual director, to believe what he is told, and to do what he is commanded.

In modified form this idea of exclusive authority, accompanied by some of its corollaries, appears in other than adherents of the Roman Church. Some, who reject and strenuously oppose the Papacy, avow in words, and, as far as they can, practice in religious teaching and priestly offices, this principle of authority. They are content themselves to believe and do as certain judges or testators direct, and they demand of others submission to them-

selves officially, when they adduce their right to rule, based upon what they regard as competent judgment or apt testimony. The most prominent adherents of this form of "authority" are found in considerable numbers, and are fast winning more than toleration, within that body whose official designation is "The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America."

Among the numerous "denominations of Christians" in America this principle of authority is by no means unknown and unfelt. It takes various forms. Occasionally it appears in unquestioning reception of certain definite bodies of doctrine. More commonly it is simple adherence to the Bible, as the book alone divinely authorized, and constituting in itself a base upon which churches may be founded and built up. Most commonly this principle of authority appears, especially among those who have dropped the church-idea, in the form of personal devotion for and adherence to some "favorite preacher:" they believe what he says, they do what he approves, they are confident that he is walking in the heavenly way, and that everybody is safe who follows him.

Nor do even the sceptical philosophers escape

the unconscious power of this principle. Every one of them—each indeed in his own way—is doing his best to get rid of personal responsibility, by conceiving or devising some "primal necessity," some "primary logical premise," some "origin of things," some "self-evolute law," some "tendency upon the whole working for good," or finally some "Great Unknown." Unto this hydra-headed "authority," the sceptical philosophers of the day are submitting; while the best hope they hold out to mankind is that this Mighty, Hidden Something may from time to time come down into this awfully real universe, readjust it, wind it up anew, and then let it again run along, alone, clashing through its cycles.

These instances all show that there exists in man, in every human person, a perverse tendency toward self-abnegation. Apparently the one thing that such men long for is escape from a manly sense of their own distinctive personality. They would like to bargain, for almost any definite good, at the price of surrendered liberty. Any power that will take them, and provide for them, may have their submission.

This perverse and common tendency is not un-

known in America. Though it is the extreme opposite of that manliness which, whatever its excesses, is *a*, indeed *the* "ruling idea" in America, yet, like all extremes, it coexists in company with its opposite.

Nor is it entirely destitute of truth. Indeed its prevalence and power are evidences that it possesses at least part of the whole truth; for power never exists in unmitigated error or falsehood. It is testimony that individual man is self-insufficient. It unconsciously confirms the fact that we are all under some Supreme. It also, by many of its obligations, confirms the both philosophic and revealed reality that "we are members one of another." Man, pursuing only selfish ends, cannot, by himself, evolve reciprocal peace and harmony with mankind.

This is all confessed and allowed. In what follows, let it not be regarded as forgotten, nor overlooked. While giving expression to cordial fellow-feeling with the manliness which is the ruling idea in America, we need not fail to give full weight to the consideration, that, however individualism may dispose itself, it cannot escape the fact, with all its consequences, that man is immutably joined

to mankind ; so that the good of the whole is the end in which the good of every person will be most surely secured and conserved.

It should, however, further be borne in mind that the course of modern progress, like that of every great historic course of progress, is one-sided. It is not the less real and energetic. The point to be set forth is not that this current, rushing, new era, rolling high in America, is altogether good, comprehensive, and in itself complete, but that it is the active force of the day, that it is bent upon evolving itself on its chosen line, that it cannot be repressed, that it will submerge or wreck whatever opposes its tide. Moreover, because it holds truth, though it be only a half-truth, it will surely, like the half-truths of other eras, go on to its natural and full development. All history shows that every great step in human progress has been one-sided. In this mortal state, men have not shown themselves capable of acting energetically upon well-balanced ruling ideas. They have always adopted what are known as "one-ideas." They have always proceeded, now by one side and now by another.

Those who are zealous for good, who would do

anything successfully, in their day and generation, to promote the good of man and advance God's glory, can never succeed if they oppose unreservedly the spirit of the age. If they wish to guide it, if they hope to preserve it against natural excesses, they must reorganize the truth, or portion of truth, that underlies it, show cordial acceptance of it, and work with it in eager, loving sympathy.

The Church in America finds herself launched now on the tide of modern progress, amid the numerous currents, all running in one direction, of peculiarly American ideas. She is not recognized by the world around as the Catholic Church. She has a painted name on her front, which looks like the name of a sect. "A Church" which has nothing better to say of itself than that it is protestant and episcopal has little ground to hope that it will be recognized by the world, or by Christendom, as in any essential respect different from "other sects." They also have taken new names, which show that they have a modern origin, and are built upon the foundations of reforming men of these last days — *e.g.*, Lutherans, Calvinists, etc.; or upon ecclesiastical principles — *e.g.*, Presbyterians,

Congregationalists; or upon single truths — *e.g.*, Unitarians, Adventists; or upon peculiar modes of worship and preaching, as the Methodists; or upon adherence to one manner in a sacrament, as the Baptists.

"The Protestant Episcopal Church" is so far benefited by its first title that it is officially distinguishable from the Roman Church. This saves it from identification with mediævalism; but, at the same time, it lays on it the burden of removing the popular deduction that it is also not primitive in doctrine, discipline, and worship. Its second title "at first blush" suggests that Episcopacy is a distinction merely, and that while this church is Episcopal, another church may be something else. If it be replied that the episcopal form of government was established by Christ, carried on by the Apostles, and transmitted in an unbroken succession of bishops to this day, so that without it organic union with the primitive Church is impossible, then the question comes, "What possible distinction is conveyed by the term Episcopal?" If episcopacy be essential to the organic existence and propagation of the Church, then the name is a burden, a reproach, and a weakness.

In spite of this weight of name, and against powerful internal sectarian forces, the Catholic instinct in her is growing daily more confident, resolute, and energetic. The Church in America feels yet in herself the ground-swell of the waves of two great eras. The era of the Reformation has now fully developed itself. The era of the Middle Ages had reached a like development when the Reformation began. Each was beneficent in its origin and early progress. The organic unity of the visible Church, with its sacraments and priesthood, all resting upon the Divine foundation, and working with living, Divine energy, was the power wielded by the whole mediæval Church in the West. One consequence was the salvation of Europe from anarchy, through the conquest of the conquering barbarians by Christianity. The organic element in the Church is, however, only one element. It wrought gloriously in its era. Like all one-sided movements it was not able to construct a permanent and complete edifice. It could rule men, but it could not conserve or even allow their liberty. While men especially needed coercion, in order that civilization might be preserved and progress assured, the Church in the West was efficient, and

prominent "as a city set on a hill." The Holy Roman Empire, with a secular Emperor and a spiritual Pope, was the ideal of Mediævalism. It was designed to protect mankind both temporally and spiritually. Europe submitted for awhile, and was the better for it. Order grew up, society became organized, nations were born; while over all were stretched two guardian hands, one of which took care of man's temporal concerns, while the other took charge of his soul.

This idea did not in practice work very smoothly. Pope and Emperor mutually encroached upon each other's domains. They even contended sharply for supremacy. Now one and now the other prevailed. At last the spiritual was the victor, and the Pope was proclaimed the Vicegerent of God on earth, to whom all kings were subject. He was also declared to be the one supreme ruler of the Church, from whom episcopal, priestly, and governmental office and authority all proceed.

When this stage was reached corruption came in like a flood. Meanwhile the nations became enlightened. Learning was no longer confined to cloisters. Even in the cloisters themselves men began to think, and study. Various philosophic

schools arose, which, while nominally subject to the ecclesiastical powers, actually discussed questions which went beneath the very foundations on which rested these powers. Not only were new and therefore erroneous doctrines added to the "faith," but corrupt practices abounded. Many efforts were made, in all directions, to reform the Church while retaining the Papacy. Some of these efforts were stamped out in ashes and blood. Others were more skilfully suppressed. It became evident that Mediævalism had run its course. As an era, it had culminated. As an idea, it had reached its full development. As a step in progress, it was one-sided. It left the world poised on one foot. The Papacy could not hold up progressive mankind any longer. It was necessary to plant the next forward step.

Then came the Reformation. Its ruling idea was the abstract power of truth, with the correlated right of every man to search for and follow truth, and to judge of it for himself. Personal responsibility and individual rights were, however, rather suggested than set forth in the Reformation. The pressure of existing institutions was yet too strong for the full and free expansion of personal freedom.

Church and state were resisted, when they put themselves in opposition to free thought; but only so far as they were thus opposed. New ecclesiastical organizations were set up, in opposition to the Church of the past, and new political combinations were made, to resist oppression from the old political and social forms. When the oppression was successfully resisted, churches and states remained which yet repressed the individual. Even persecution was resorted to by some of the Reformers.

This, on the continent of Europe! In England the opposition was rather against the Papacy than the Church of the past. Even there, however, a large and powerful party were in complete sympathy with the Continental reformation. These rejected *in toto* the Church of the past, and took position on the distinctive ground of the revolution in doctrine and practice—including church, state, and society—which characterized the movement of the time. This distinctive ground was the supremacy of abstract truth. The Bible was accepted as the one authorized exponent of that abstract truth; but its own force was declared to be inherent and self-evolute.

It has taken three centuries for this primary principle of the Reformation to evolve itself fully. It first assailed the organic, historic Church. It erected "churches" of its own, based upon the idea of the abstract power of truth. It evolved itself into numerous sects, that claimed neither historic origin nor continuity, and gave no other reason for being than the doctrine taught, and the good claimed to be effected. In the national Church of England there has always existed a party which rejects the essential principle of the Reformation; holds that the truth is not abstract, but embodied in the person of Jesus; Who set up his Gospel in form as an organic body, endued with a priesthood, entrusted with sacraments which are veritable means of actual grace, commissioned ambassadorially, enjoined to teach His holy doctrine, imbued with the ever-presence of the Spirit of Light and Life, and into whose keeping was given in trust "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." Even in England, however, the essential principle of the Reformation was more powerful than the conservative antagonism, which, adhering to primitive Christianity, preserved the organic Gospel in the Church, and maintained his-

toric continuity through an unbroken line of bishops in apostolic succession. The Established Church of England, however, has only been a breakwater in the way of the flood of the Reformation. It has not stopped, it has hardly checked the rush of its reckless revolution.

After rejecting the historic Church, this principle of the supreme authority and self-evolute power of abstract truth was not long in questioning the Bible itself. Hence the sharp, searching, and relentless criticism to which the book has been subjected. The very cradle of the Reformation has rocked the children who have grown into the men of modern philosophy. Not content with assailing the authority of the Word of God, these men, true to the instinct of the Reformation, have since questioned the very existence of God himself; and now at last have evolved the final possibility of this primary principle into the conclusion, that the original, abstract, self-evolute truth is an "Unknown and Unknowable Power."

These are now the two waves, which, rolling in from the far past, beat, one on this side and one on that, around the Rock on which is built and building the Catholic Church in America. The princi-

ple of authority, with the duty of personal obedience—entire and unquestioning—is the force which sustains one. The other is driven by the directly opposite principle, viz., that organization is a result of abstract self-evolute energy. No organization, therefore, has any authority that it may enforce, nor any rights beyond what it shall prove to every one's individual satisfaction, be his capacity what it may, and whether he has or has not the "willing mind."

The storms that gave rise to these forces have long since subsided. They are only ground-swells now. They divide, however, between them the whole current of modern progress. They overflow America. The True Catholic Church, if she does her work and fulfils her mission of to-day, must take them into account. She can commit herself to neither alone. She stands at the point of the confluence of both. The true is ever true. The organic Church is the one Body of Him Who is the truth.

Here then is her principle, her *raison d'être*, her power, her assurance, and the word of her mission. God—manifest in Christ, respecting the dignity of His own image, man, and essentially self-consist-

ent—has made the truth free and open, not by confining it, but by embodying it in an institution, which is Catholic and therefore all-comprehensive.

Thus situated and thus commissioned, the Church in America has her special word to speak into the hearts and minds of modern men. She must speak in sympathy with the best of modern affections, and in accord with the course and direction of modern thought. The evils of the times are manifest, but so also are the good forces that are contending with them. "The times are very evil," undoubtedly; but he who regards them as only evil had better retire to some cloister, and enjoy if he can his seclusion. He is of no use on the arena of active thought and life. The Church of Christ cannot be controlled by the folly which sees evil only in this intensively active, bold, and vigorous age and nation.

One thing is evident, in relation both to mediævalism and the Reformation. They are not, in their concrete forms, factors in current progress. The evolutions of the ages since have left both systems far in the rear. Sporadic cases of both appear now and then; but, as co-ordinated forces, both have ceased to command. Whatever was

true in either remains indeed, but not in the old combinations. A mediævalist is an anachronism; and a man of the Reformation is only a little less "behind the age."

Nor will it do to revert to "primitive Christianity." Primitive Christianity was adapted to primitive times. It will be well indeed for the Catholic Church in America, if she becomes as intensely alive to her period and her surroundings as was the Church in her first ages. She may fulfil her mission, as did the early Church, by clinging to the faith once delivered, and by working as in the unseen presence of Him Who ever indwells His own Body, and Who has promised to come again and crown His faithful ones. Primitive methods, however, may or may not be adapted to modern conditions. That portion of the Gospel which was put forth most prominently in primitive times may not be the portion that those commissioned now "rightly to divide the word of truth" should in this era make prominent. We have not constructed our era. It has grown around us. God's own word is ever living. In the one Gospel He has a voice and a message of good tidings to man, fitted to every stage of human progress.

Let not a misunderstanding here arise!

The position is taken, and should be defended to the utmost, that "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" is unchangeable; nothing new can be developed outside of it. As ages progress men have developed, and so will continue. For every age a specific division of the Gospel has been best adapted. The primitive Christian age, amid the seethings of philosophy and the dying throes of paganism, settled the true doctrines respecting the one Divine personality of the consubstantial Son of God in everlasting union with humanity. Jesus has been recognized and worshipped ever since as the only veritable Godman, the co-eternal Son of God, the Saviour of men, the everlasting King in His inseparable divine manhood, under the Father, yet equal in the Godhead, having the universe of heaven, earth, and hell for His domain.

Primitive Christianity lived, taught, suffered, and departed, leaving the creeds as its legacy to the ages, and handing on the organic body, the Church, in her entirety.

The Roman Empire, having failed to conquer Christianity, was very early itself conquered by Christianity. Then came an era of new adaptation.

The Lordship of Jesus was reflected in the earthly Emperor of the civilized world. Retaining the primitive faith and the ancient order, the Church began to deck herself in the robes of temporal dignity and power. She developed official splendor and a gorgeous ceremonial around the order of her divinely originated hierarchy. She became a recognized power in the world. She entered into alliances. She gave influence to the state, and took in return dignities and revenues. This new relation brought its peculiar dangers. The Church suffered, was in some respects corrupted, but she nevertheless proved herself the salt of the earth, and she stands out in the history of those ages like a beacon on a hill.

It took more than ten centuries to develop Cæsarism in the Church. It culminated finally in Hildebrand as its Julius. Five centuries after came its Augustus in the person of Leo X. These ages were ages of glory. In spite of the darkness, ascribed to them by "those who content themselves with being in the dark about them," and in spite of the evils which every candid student of their history must confess, they were progressive ages. Mankind made in them great strides forward; and

the Church, by her words, her works, and her worship, helped on the upward march. The legacy, left at the end of this long era by the Church, was as distinct as that left by her after the primitive era. It was that of the supreme Lordship of Jesus. The hideous caricature of this truth and reality, which the Papacy displays, does not hide the great fact, of which that is a repulsive mask. The mediæval age came to an end, ceased to be a force in living progress, attempted indeed and still tries to stem the mighty onflowing of its tide, but has left, nevertheless, engraved on imperishable historic rock, grand testimony to the supreme Lordship, in heaven and on earth, of the Son of God, Who is the Son of Man.

The era of the Reformation, with all its distractions, variations, and schisms, has left its peculiar legacy also; and it is in the line of the same course of development. Nothing new, only a distinct portion of the "one faith, rightly divided!" Though it set afloat the idea of the self-evolute power of abstract truth, the Reformers themselves gathered round Jesus as The Truth. They were not able to lay the spirit they had called up, but they themselves kept fast hold of their LORD.

Three centuries have rolled by. What now remains, in open view, as the direct result of the Reformation, is a heterogeneous multitude of accordant and discordant sects, which discard history, and claim no other right to existence than because their constituents think they hold truth and do good. An indirect result of the same cause is modern philosophy, under all varieties of which lie the assumed first principle that truth is in essence abstract, and in energy self-evolute.

Still, the legacy left by the Reformation the Church cannot afford to lose. It was as truly a period in progress as was either the primitive age or the mediæval. The eternal consistency and immortal supremacy of The Truth, pure and simple, was never set forth before and defended as it was during the throes of the Reformation.

The correlative of this principle was not slow in making its appearance. It began to exist even in the very period of the Reformation itself. It has since grown to maturity, and is now the leading and ruling present "idea of this age." It is the fact of the personal dignity, right, and liberty of individual man. Granting the ruling idea of the Reformation—that truth is self-consistent, supreme,

and free—the question at once arises, "Who shall be the judge to decide in any case 'what is truth'?"

The Reformation was not ready with the answer. The ages since have been seeking the answer. In this present age we have the answer embodied. It is not embodied in any human institution. It is rather infused into the character of the age, constituting its energy, and giving line of direction to its forces. This it is which makes the present a new era. It has a "ruling idea" which has never before ruled. That idea has been known indeed, for it is only one of the utterances made in "the faith once for all delivered to the saints;" but its time to come to the front, take the lead, and become the energy of current progress, has only now in these last days struck the hour.

This living, irrepressible, invincible, pervading, "ruling idea" is the dignity, glory, freedom, and illimitable potentiality of the personal man. He has at last awakened to the majesty of his Godlikeness. He does not know yet the philosophy of this Godlikeness. He does not generally and willingly acknowledge his natural likeness to God. He is not even convinced that he was ever created

at all, much less that he was created by God after His own image. Though he does not recognize it, he manifests it. Every "seeing eye" can behold the type after which he is developing, and can perceive the idea which, even if he be unconscious of it, is ruling him.

Therefore the Church—being the body of Christ the living organization with ambassadorial functions credited to the age now evolving—must, if she be true to her calling, so divide the word of truth that her voice may be heard and heeded now. Holding on to her gains; prizing highly her primitive, mediæval, and Reformation records; not deserting one of the truths enshrined in her history, she has something more now to do than simply to reproduce the methods of the past.

Some will persist in reproducing these methods. Let them alone! There are plenty of primitivists, mediævalists, and reformists to furnish congregations for all priests and preachers who wish to live behind the age. Their souls are as well worth saving as are any men's. These anachronisms are contented. Many of them serenely scorn the age they live in. Many more prophesy all sorts of infidelity, immorality, and confusion as the sure out-

come of this age. It is not worth while to answer them. Still less will it profit to oppose them. Leave them where the age leaves them, stranded, or lagging far behind.

The living Church must keep up with the most forward columns. She can do so. Only she can so do; because the faith, she holds and has taught from the very infancy of this great and powerful civilization, contained then the very doctrine which has only now at last emerged as the ruling idea of an age. Modern man, even the intensest modern American man, holds not half so glorious a truth as she points out in the very first chapter of the revelation she has been proclaiming to all the ages. The Word of God, which from beginning to end is one Gospel, first proclaimed the supremacy of mankind amid all creation, with the assured, persistent personality of every man. It deduced, from both these facts, the inevitable conclusions that man is free, and that, through the utmost possible exercise of this freedom, he may best develop himself in accordance with his type, and so approve himself unto Him Who made him.

It is evident that modern progress does not recognize the source of its ruling idea. The tend-

ency of the "spirit of the age" is to exaggerate mere human powers. From the first, man has delighted in the self-deception, that he is sufficient unto himself. The philosophers of the day are saying to him that, out of the innate potentiality of his own being, he has evolved all his historic attainments, and that this prevalent assurance of his dignity, or common consciousness of his power, is only another manifestation of his self-evolute energy. Some theologians are following in the wake of modern philosophy, and betraying their calling by endeavoring to bring all the great truths and facts of the Gospel within the scope of this philosophy of the self-evolute. They do not even fear to say that our Lord Himself was only a product of the evolving force of the ages; thus sanctioning the conclusion, that another age may and probably will evolve another, and of course a greater, CHRIST. One moment's reflection shows how these false teachers are preparing the way for the coming Antichrist.

These are a few of the many evils which lie in the track of modern progress. It is not necessary to ignore them. One may be in heartiest accord with the spirit of the age, without denying that

peculiar dangers threaten it. The past teaches us that every great step in progress has been accompanied by evils, which lay in the very line of its advancement, which arose just as the great evils of our times are arising. They were, as these are, mere exaggerations. The errorists of the past, like those of the present, mistook their portion of the truth for the whole truth. They did not observe, or perversely refused to believe, that their ruling idea was only one aspect of the infinite variety of the comprehensive one truth.

Whoever, however, puts himself in opposition to any evolution, of even one-sided truth, measures himself against the whole: for truth as a whole supports all its sides; while He, Who is the Truth, supports, pervades, and defends the whole in its unity.

It is useless to stand athwart the march of modern progress. It is in vain to oppose it. It may be easy, but it is profitless, to hold it up to scorn. Like every thing of beauty and power, it can be easily caricatured. Those who have been cast in moulds of the past, and have become cooled and hardened in antique shapes, cannot of course become plastic again, nor be moulded anew for mod-

ern uses. They who think the Church is such a cold and hard antique institution will, if they are merely worldly-wise, simply disregard her; and, if they are churchmen, will retire into the obscurity of their diminishing congregations, to grow old with the aged and see the rising youth desert them.

The Church is not such a cast-iron, unliving, irresponsive thing. She is a vital and vitalizing body. Her Lord is in her, now as ever. She lives by His indwelling. He formed her. He took her unto Himself. She is His very bride, the living mother of children, whom He gave her in the past; as well as equally the living mother of the children, He would have her bear and nourish up in these last days.

What peculiar work has the Church of the present to do? She can do no more than present the Gospel to modern men, and call them unto Christ that they may be saved. In rightly dividing the truth committed to her in trust, what part shall she especially present in this current era? How shall she present it?

Answers will be submitted to these questions. They will relate first to doctrine, next to discipline, and finally to worship.

The Church has one doctrine committed to her, which exactly meets the requirements of this age. Like all her doctrines its base is a fact; not only a well-authenticated historic incident, but a living, present, and energetic reality. The time has arrived for this fact to come to the surface and take post in the front. It has been known from the beginning, but it has been rather held in reserve, though it be the basis on which all Christian doctrine stands. It is the foundation of all, but it has not yet been brought forth, as it must now be brought forth, into the light. This era is especially remarkable for digging down to foundations. All its philosophy — both learned and common — is fundamental. Christianity comes into the arena in this living age, and puts her foundation over against all other foundations. Her specific exhortation, amid modern progress, is, 'Come, ye men of the day, ye men of thought and action, ye free men and bold, look at your foundations, and then look on this that cometh down from above. Decide honestly which will hold the edifice in which one man and all men can live in personal fulness, and develop in common harmonious unity.' Man must be personally filled full, or he will not attain

the perfection in which only he can be satisfied. Humanity must be developed as a whole to perfection, or not one man will attain peace. Here lies this dual necessity. Personal man and the unit mankind are reciprocally interdependent. The good of either is the good of all. The perfectness of both involves the normality of each.

Before stating in terms what the fact and doctrine is, that Christianity must make most prominent in order to be the best friend of the age, and in the elucidation of which she will show her earnest sympathy, or rather fellow-feeling, with the age, let us turn aside a moment to notice the fact that modern philosophy — learned and common, now as ever the antagonist of Christianity — is really deceiving the people. Its orators, poets, historians, and novelists outwardly laud the age, while in every variety of ways they nominally uphold personal liberty of thought, speech, action, and even manners; but they take away with hidden hand all that makes personal liberty of any value. Modern philosophy denies human personality. It declares that every man is only a temporary evolution of forces, that his personality is a fortuitous compound of matter, sensibility, thought

and will. Hence all that modern philosophy has to say to this age is, that its notion of human liberty, dignity, and rights is a delusion of a delusion. "Personal man is not a unit to which members, capacities, energies, and will belong, but is merely a dissolving compound, of which these are constituents."

No wonder these worldly-wise men are discussing the question, "Is life worth living?"

Christianity on the contrary assumes, and is the teacher of, personality. Her philosophy starts with a postulate, as every philosophy must start with a postulate. Hers is that personality is primordial; that it is the only conceivable "origin of things" which can sustain any coherent system of thought, and practically uphold the actual universe with its contents in order. She enters into the spirit of this age, as philosophy cannot do. She shows that she is one with it in fundamental concept, while she has a revelation to proclaim which carries forward the hope of the age to its highest conceivable fruition. She confirms man's confidence in the indivisible unity and persistent evolution upward of his personality. She exhorts him to hold on to his confidence in it. She will show him

this personality reaching forth after perfection; exhibit the point wherein its perfectness may be consummated; while, at the same point, the whole perfectness of humanity may likewise be conserved. Christianity is the one true friend of man and mankind in this age, as she has been in every other age. She manifests her fellow-feeling by endeavoring to save men from themselves. The prevalent wisdom of the age is untrue to the common instincts of man. Affecting to advance him, it would teach him a philosophy which leaves nothing in him worth advancement, or indeed worth saving. Even more, it leaves nothing of him that can possibly be saved; for, if personality be taken away from man, if it be true that he is not an indivisible, indestructible, and persistent one being, it matters little what may become of the fragments into which he will be broken, none of them can be his person.

Christianity, however, adhering to and proclaiming, with clear voice, the fundamental principles, indeed the primary concepts, of her Divine and human philosophy—viz., the original Divine Personality, with the immortal personality of man, created in the Divine image — makes known the

first fact, the all-pervading and supporting basis of her whole distinctive system. This is

THE INCARNATION.

Not a temporary incarnation, not an incarnation often repeated already, and possibly to be repeated many times again, as some religious caricaturists of the remote East imagine, but one Incarnation that joins whole humanity to the Godhead forever in indivisible, though distinct, unity with the person of God's only begotten eternal Son!

This fact and doctrine — most profound in the revelation it bears, but also most minutely practical in its operation — it is plainly the mission of the Living Church to-day to set forth, manifest, expound, press in upon men's understandings, and lay alongside the individualism of this age. The New Era has awakened mankind to the truth and power of man's personality. It has not overlooked the evident organic unity of man in and with mankind. One school at least of modern philosophy—the Comtists—while attempting to take away all conviction, even all knowledge, is yet trying to persuade men that, in spite of losing personality, it may be worth while to live only to promote the

perfectness of some final, evolute, grand, organic humanity. A poor prospect for any conscious human person! There will be nothing in this final evolution which he can even perceive, much less enjoy; for, long before it can come, he himself will be resolved into his constituent elements, and personally cease to be.

Christianity is too good a friend to man, to leave him to the cruel tender mercies of these philosophers. Her fact of the Emmanuel — God's Son the Son of Man now and forever — conserves the immortal unity of personal man, in unbroken union with organic mankind evolving forever.

The truth of the One Incarnation is this; it is much more, but it is at least this: Human nature, in its essential completeness and wholeness, is joined forever to the Divine nature in One Person. The feelings, the reason including understanding, and the will, the body, soul, and spirit, included in human nature, are taken up into union with the Divine nature, in the unity of One Person. God in man, or man in God does not express this union. The only true expression of it is the Godman.

Some obvious consequences arise out of this perfect union. Tripartite normal manhood is not

subjected to service. It is uplifted into communion. The human body, soul, and spirit of Christ are not absorbed in, but conjoined with God. The human feelings are not overwhelmed in the dazzling flood of the Divine consciousness, but remain normal, in the realization always of the goodness of God. The human reason is not crushed under the load of Divine Omniscience, but contemplates the serene consistency of the One Lawgiver, and rejoices, unconfounded forever, in the pervading harmony of His words and works. The human will is not subjected to the resistless supremacy of the Omnipotent One, but accords with the Divine will, in spontaneous perception and glad assent.

All this is true, because the One Incarnation is not subjection of the human to the Divine, but their immortal co-union and blessed communion.

This is what the Incarnation is, as existing and manifested in the person of Jesus. He took, however, not one man's person into Himself. There are not two persons, one human and one Divine, in Christ Jesus. He took humanity, in its complete essence, into Himself, so that every man and all mankind are with Him and in Him, in a man-

ner analogous to their union in and with their natural father, the first Adam. Hence Jesus is called in Scripture the Last Adam.

It is useless, because it would be vain, to inquire into the mode of the consistency of this union, this Incarnation, this Godmanhood. We may, however, learn much of its practical bearing and efficacy; and, in order that we may learn this clearly, it may be well, reverently but "with boldness," to contemplate it as it now is in the person of the Ascended One. In Jesus human nature sits serenely, and unabashed, at the Right Hand, on the Throne of the Most High.

Let this picture be presented to modern men! Let them match it, if they can! It is a reality. No human imagination conceived it. It is a fact revealed. The Church—the Body of Christ, indwelt ever by His living presence, His beloved, His priestly ambassador—has this fact intrusted to her. She is to proclaim it. The hour has struck when she should proclaim it as she never before has, indeed never before could, because no time past was ripe for it.

The age of this new era is ripe for it. The evolving enlightenment of westward flowing, pro-

gressive civilization, has given man a conception of his Godlikeness. He does not yet perceive it as Godlikeness. He thinks that he himself has evolved these prevalent glowing ideas of his own personal dignity, rights, and liberty. The self-constituted teachers of the age are flattering his bent, even while secretly stabbing his hope to the heart. They are falling fast, however, as their congener philosophers always before have fallen, beneath the better reasoning of Christian philosophy. Yet they have the alliance of that mysteriously corrupted human condition in sin, which appals us, which we are told arose first from man's misuse of liberty, and which we now see growing and darkening through the same perversity.

Still, in spite of sin, in spite of the manifest extravagances of popular individualism—nothwithstanding the scorn hurled at the age by men not alone of the old world—despite the caricatures and travesties which skilful artists with pen or pencil delight to portray,—the fact remains as the most prominent fact of the world to-day, the most potent force in progress, that man is and knows that he is by nature great and noble and free.

The plain duty of the Church is to fall in with

this strong conviction. The spirit of the age may be safely admitted into her precincts. Her doctrine, discipline, and worship may safely feel its influence. They are feeling its influence. Some of her doctors are abating the consistency of the One Faith, in subserviency to the spirit of the age. They are, however, in error. They are doing what there is no need of doing. The whole One Faith is strong, consistent and unchangeable. What they had much better do is to set forth that portion of the faith which is specially adapted to the age. Some are disposed to abandon all discipline, because its old methods are no longer applicable. This is another error. The right and duty of discipline can never, without unfaithfulness, be abandoned by the Kingdom on earth, to which has been committed the work of officially binding and losing. Some are disposed to unloose the whole prescribed order of worship, and leave priest and people to follow any course that exigencies, or taste, or even caprice may suggest. This would produce confusion. The better way is to perceive and acknowledge that times and circumstances, as well as men, are both changed and changing. This perception, in connection with the

pervading conservatism of the Church, may be safely trusted to effect all the liturgic flexibility which may ever, in any case, be needed; while those, whose liturgic education is enlarged and devotional tastes refined, may have all the enrichment they require.

These are methods. The essential point is the wider and better and more detailed application of the fact of the Incarnation to the character, conduct, and thought of the age. The ruling element of that character is freedom. Let it evolve. God gave it. Rather, He made it germinal in man, when He created him after His own image. Man must be forever free. He cannot be other than a human caricature, unless he be forever free. Otherwise, according to his environment, he will be either a grim or a ludicrous caricature. Whether in heaven or hell, a slave is no man.

It follows, therefore, that salvation itself cannot be satisfactory to man, if it be presented merely as a boon. The correlative opposite is just as obvious. If a man be compelled not to ruin himself forever, his freedom would be equally taken away from him. He would be ruined by this very compulsion.

The Church, while true to her calling, will encourage in man the fullest exercise of his inherent liberty. In this connection a certain philosophy comes forward. It precedes the word of revelation. If agreed to on all hands, it need not be discussed. Its conclusion is taken for granted before the Church begins to preach to free men. Should any one question it, however, a preliminary discussion must be passed through. It is the philosophy of the finite. Man is finite. Every part of him is bounded. All his faculties are limited. Freedom is limited. He can only do what he is able to do. He can develop or evolve, or advance, or attain, only within the limits of his capacities. His freedom, therefore, is relative, not absolute. It consists in untrammelled exercise of his will and powers, up to the farthest reach and fullest satisfaction of his capacities. He must be placed in a universe fitted to him, and have free range through all its boundaries. Is this all? If he gain the whole universe, there would yet be an unfilled depth in his nature. There is something in every normal man which can never be satisfied with mere riches. He must impart, as well as receive. In the deepest depth of his nature lies

the consciousness that "it is more blessed to give than to receive." He can only be profoundly free when he pours out his soul—himself—toward another, who yearns for this outpouring, and responds with reciprocal personal communion.

This is love. God is love. God's own very nature extends beyond mere giving; it must receive also. In this lies the essence of the image of God. Man was created by God not merely out of benevolence, nor made a product only of His goodness or beauty or power. Man is all this, but he is much more. These are the mere trappings of his glory. He is made so that he may become the "child" and the "friend" of God. It is written that "God is jealous." It follows that His love demands faithfulness, not of service merely, but of reciprocal response. Love requires love for its own existence. Love is, and always must be, dual.

Can a grander subject be cast among the evolving processes of modern thought, than that God has created man with the design that his nature should sit with Him on the throne of the universe forever; so that every human person, who so wills, may be His friend, His beloved forever?

The applications of this fact are boundless. They contain enough for many new chapters in the One Catholic Faith ; many new volumes of devotion, many new songs of faith and hope : and yet the One Book contains, already, texts fitted to every point.

There is a step further. Not only has the Incarnation enthroned human nature in heaven in the person of Jesus Christ, but it is the means by which any man, retaining his distinctive personality and consequent freedom, may serenely rise into sonship and friendship with God.

The Incarnation was followed by the Atonement. The Incarnation was not, however, an expedient merely, made only to affect the Atonement, which latter had become necessary because man had used his freedom in disobedience and fallen into sin. Though it were sin that made the Atonement necessary, the Incarnation was, nevertheless, independently necessary to the completion of man's freedom. The perfection of the Divine image in created man made the personal link of the Incarnation needful. It was effected, indeed, in time subsequent to sin ; but it must have been effected at some time, sin or no sin.

All this follows by necessity from the essential nature of man. He is so exalted that he cannot be satisfied merely as a receiver of gifts. Though God made him, yet He made him after His own image. He endued him with qualities that made him capable of personal free communion with, or equally free estrangement from the Divine Person. Now the dignity of free communion demands something higher than the relation of benefactor and recipient. Gratitude, reverence and devotion may exist between a giver and receiver of bounty; but love requires personal reciprocity. Love delights in, indeed lives by, self-sacrifice; but it demands a reciprocal sacrifice. It is personal, and consists in mutual unreserved self-sacrifice. Love between man and God retains its own essence. It is reciprocal. God has made man's nature so that this reciprocity may be possible. What is thus possible by nature becomes actual through the Incarnation.

The Incarnation declares to every individual human person, that the Godman having assumed human nature yet retains it and will keep it forever in the unity of His divine personality; in order that all who will, among the godlike race — forever free

— may become "partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Peter i., 4). The philosophical explanation of the mode of this partaking need not be considered. Practically it can be nothing less than such union and communion through the community of one nature between personal man and the personal Godman—that saved man shall not remain a servant merely, but become more than a friend, a son of God, and thereby a living member in union with Him, presented to the Father and dwelling serenely forever in His open presence, with the Holy Ghost, the Lord of light and life, evermore suffusing him.

Remembering again that the mode of this union is not in view, let thought be concentrated upon its effects. The one deepest sentiment of manliness is subserved by it. That sentiment lies amid the lower strata of consciousness in every manly character. Sin has shattered it, but it is still in its place. No true man wishes to be a mere recipient of favors. No man wishes to be put under a law, imposed by mere superiority, being obliged to obey it and live, or disobey it and die. We are sensible enough to know that our Creator may have placed us under mere law if He had chosen, and therefore that rebellion against Him would be arrant folly and deep

ingratitude. Yet, from their first father onward through all generations, multitudes of men have been guilty of just this folly and ingratitude. Through all the ages the Church has rebuked this kind of wickedness. She has not, however, attempted to eradicate from human consciousness the felt assurance that there is an essentially human characteristic, which suggests this prevalent unwillingness to submit to mere authority, or to bow down before mere power.

The truth is, that man's natural Godlikeness assures him that his Lord—and a Lord he must have, because he is self-insufficient,—will rule him through his heart and in accordance with his reason. Man cannot abandon his reason. Man only can submit by his heart. His will yields, and that most gladly, when his reason is satisfied and his heart is filled.

Through the Incarnation, God is so joined to the organic unity of all human nature, that every personal member of that organism may have the grace of God implanted in him, within the vital centre of his personal being. Not by compulsion, but with glad accord, such an one will find his reason illumined by the truth ; his will, not subdued, but

won; his mind quickened, his affections satisfied, his whole being in fact — body, soul and spirit — imbued with the consciousness that God is in him, and he is in God. This union, effected at the hidden centre of sub-conscious personal being, rises through all channels and goes forth through all his faculties, filling the man with harmony, and surrounding him with peace. This is the salvation that the Incarnation makes possible. Without the Incarnation, man might become a glorious subject of the Supreme King, but he would be not the man he now is. He might be equal with the angels, the ministering spirits who behold outwardly the face of the Father and gladly obey His behests, but he would remain after all a servant forever. The Incarnation opens the way to a loftier ascent above the universe, a nearer approach to the Supreme One, and a closer communion with the Archetype of humanity, Who is the creative source whence humanity proceeds.

A shadowy vision of this fact, Pantheism grotesquely and horribly portrays. Many vain attempts have been made to ingraft Pantheism on Christianity. There is also a charnel-house image of it which Materialism has set up. Neither,

however, is true. God is not a mere self-evolute potentiality, either as the very matter of the universe or as the pervading soul of the universe. If He were, man could not be His creation; for there is no place for free will — the very determinate characteristic of humanity — to come in under either Pantheism or Materialism. And yet both these are counterfeits of splendid facts. Man finds himself in the midst of matter and force, and there is no reason to suppose, however his place or state may change, that he will ever go out of the universe. He may boldly ask, What shall be the relation of saved men to the immortal universe? Saved men, as Christianity teaches, and as the living Church is called now to declare, are saved by being lifted into personal union and communion with the Creator and Preserver of all being. Personally saved, man has post within the embrace of God. Shall he be outside the universe, which is a mere creation of God? The Spirit, by the words of St. Paul, throws a ray of His light upon this subject: "It is sown a soul-body; it is raised a spirit-body" (1 Cor. xv., 44). The mortal body, as first made, was a complete instrument for all the uses of the soul. Had man

never made himself the servant of sin, discord would not have entered into him, nor disorder into his environment. The mortal body was the soul's point of contact and means of action and reaction with the universe. The immortal body, therefore, according to this analogy, will be the spirit's point of contact and means of action and reaction still with the universe, and a perfect as well as complete instrument for all the spirit's uses. We need ask no more. The whole ground is covered. When the time comes we shall enter into detailed knowledge and practice. Meanwhile, if we wish to indulge imagination, a wide scope is open, through which we may range, picturing to ourselves what men may be and do in boundless space where matter is no longer a clog, and how they may speed in time when succession is no longer a hidden roll.

These, however, are speculations, innocent certainly, and possibly profitable ; but because they are not revelations, they need not come among the doctrines of faith. They are only touched upon here to show that there is nothing in nature, nothing in either science or philosophy, to impair the force of that aspect of the doctrine of salvation which the Incarnation sets forth, elucidates and insures.

The Incarnation, being the first fundamental fact of the Gospel, is the very basis of all grace and beginning of all wisdom. We have to get away from that theology, whose base is merely abstract doctrine, before we can perceive the significance of the Incarnation. Its primary operation is, by organic action, through human nature, upon and into the human person. It goes down beneath the mind to which doctrine is addressed. It penetrates within the affections to which motives are applied. It does not supersede, subject, or coerce the will; but it enters into the very centre of personal being, into the spring of consciousness, and there implants the regenerate new life. This new life links the essence of the personal man to the source of all good, to the fountain of all being. The union would be perfect in every man, were every man in perfect harmony with God. Freedom prevents the operation of the Incarnation where the human person refuses or neglects to co-operate; and impedes it where his co-operation is imperfect or partial. Sin, being a fact of the whole mortal state of mankind, impedes its operation. Still, if all conditions are favorable, if the man is docile, if he do his part, then the Incarna-

tion works its full effect upon him. He becomes sanctified in the fountain of his being. His natural Godlikeness being restored, he is in God and God in him. That assured and felt centre of his personality, whence consciousness springs, and out of which proceed thought, feeling, will, and action, is so united to God, that the Divine grace, which wins him, and the Divine power, by which he acts, appear as the spontaneous movement of his own nature. Hence, perfect satisfaction fills the person. All that he is, thinks, feels, and acts under no sense of compulsion, and without any oppressive sense of obligation. He is not a mere recipient of salvation, as a boon from a Being Who is far away from and far above him; but this Being takes him into loving communion. This Being, in His own essence, is love. His own very constitution requires reciprocity. He cannot Himself be content with mere giving. He has made man for Himself. He has put within man that very characteristic of reciprocity, and made him incapable of a loving satisfaction without reciprocity, in order that God and man may be satisfied only in deep and full personal communion.

The line of thought presented by this fact will,

undoubtedly, expand into a new chapter in Catholic theology. No one can foresee what may be written philosophically, poetically, and devotionally in elucidation, expansion, and application of the idea. Two parts belong to it. Man on the Divine Throne! Every "man of good-will" so joined to the Lord that the life of God shall pulsate through him; while, his distinctive personality remaining, he shall be king and priest unto God forever!

Nothing like this has been or can be presented to man apart from Christianity. The time is ripe now for its presentation in the foremost rank of the doctrines of Christ. Nothing of the past is to be lost. It does not remove all the great truths, which other ages have made prominent. It does not cut itself off from the accumulated stores of Catholic Theology. They stand as the Law stood when Christ came. Not one jot nor one tittle fails. All shall be fulfilled. But they are to be fulfilled, rounded out, completed, and bound in one compacted unity, by the application of the Incarnation to the "ruling idea" of this current era.

Let the Church awake to the exigencies of the time! Let her see and acknowledge that this

rousing of the human personality, this perception of the power and dignity of man as man, which characterizes this era, is of God! Let her look through the mists which surround it; and, despite the pride and self-confidence which corrupt and distort it, see the natural human godlikeness that underlies it, and have faith that God will exalt His own likeness, controlling its excesses! Then let her throw herself heartily into the movement, guiding it, as God's own instrumentality and chosen messenger for that very purpose!

Whenever, in all the past, the Church has recognized the spirit of the age as the power of God, and thrown herself cordially into it, she has revived in her own inner life, drawn earnest souls in multitudes into her fold, taken new vantage-ground in the world, conquered the specific evil of the time; and only failed when the world, tired of opposition, has succeeded in corrupting her.

An attempt is already making by the world to corrupt the Church in her doctrine. It is to be feared that some even of her priests and prophets may be seduced. There are signs of endeavors to abate something of established truth, and give up some sure grounds in the faith; in order to

enter into an alliance with the culture, learning, and moral excellence that are of the earth earthy. It may not be worth while to attempt to eradicate this evil by discipline. The force behind it is too nearly allied to the power, that attends the footsteps of the Almighty, seen in the progress of the age. Better than opposition, better than discipline—at least until its law can be evolved from established principles illuminated by the spirit of the age—will be such hearty acceptance of the true and the good, in their modern aspects, as will win all earnest and sincere souls; while preaching shall set forth, as never before, the Incarnation with all that flows from it.

Let the Incarnation become the chief theme of the pulpit, and it will soon become the song of the advancing array of the Church Militant. The world will see the issue of Christianity presented in a new aspect. "What think ye of Christ"—the old question—will be addressed, not so much to the fears, as to sense of manliness in all human kind. Every one, in whom noble aspirations exist, will find them hereby overpassed throughout imagination's widest and loftiest sweep. Every one, who feels a heart's

pulsations, and clings to the assurance that love is stronger than death, mightier than all opposing forces, sweet as life, and the only ruler that leaves us and keeps us free, will rest in the Incarnation; because it is the link which binds to a salvation, in which man and mankind may dwell in everlasting fulness of personal satisfaction, with perfect reciprocity, Godward and manward, forever.

The American Church is called to this Mission. Not another Body on earth can in like manner fulfil it; nor with equal hope pursue it.

The other three living ecclesiastical organizations, yet active amid Western Civilization, are the Roman, the Anglican, and the Sectarian. The latter, though hardly an organization, is yet, however broken and numerously named, so pervaded by "one idea," that its divisions may be all classified together.

The Roman Church is quite out of sympathy with the age. She is squarely opposed to it. She seems to have no conception of the godlikeness of every personal man. Her "one-idea" is the half-truth of the organic unity. She suppresses the individual. She requires him to subject himself, and promises salvation as a result of corporate life.

Every man has only to pursue the path marked out for him; while he who has care of his soul will keep him safe in and through the living body whose very life is salvation. Not only can the Roman Church see only evil in modern thought, as it centres in personal human liberty; but she feels impelled to fight against it, as if it were only a diabolical inspiration. Let her do all the good she can, and it may be not a little among the uneducated masses that may become turbulent, or among despairing souls of such cultured ones as are weary of discussion, and hope to find rest in self-immolation. It will be time and energy wasted to contend against her. She may be left, where the current of progress leaves her, far in the rear.

The Anglican Church cannot take post abreast the times, because she is so intensely Anglican. In what may be said respecting her in this connection, let nothing be understood in disparagement of her glory. Her record gleams like light over all the world. Her specific mission, as the national church of England, she has fulfilled. If the American Church shall show, when her specific work is done, a record comparable to that of

her dear old mother of England, she may thank God, Whose grace will have sustained her. The mission of the Anglican Church was to defend, support, and transmit the doctrines and practice of the Catholic Faith, the Apostolic succession, the grace of the Sacraments, and the open Word of God, with the primitive equality of the Episcopate embodied in the relative independence of nationality. She has fulfilled and is fulfilling her mission, in a way that ranks her equally with the Church in any age, while it manifests her unity in the One Body enduring through all ages.

The Anglican Church, however, never could overpass England, in the home domain, and even her missions abroad are miniature Anglican Churches. The "idea," ingrained in every Englishman, is that whatever is great or good must be, if not in essence at least in type, English. The English traditional constitution, on which the English character is based, is a simple fiction. It is not true that the varied ranks of men are composed of essentially different constituents. Although habit and education perpetuate differences of condition, and these are very marked in manner, thought, tone, aspect, disposition and other nu-

merous ways, yet it is not true that real human excellence—be it of talent, character, beauty, worth, manliness or whatever else—appears only in the "upper classes" or descends through them by heredity. It is very fairly distributed through all classes. Yet this fiction is ineradicable from an Englishman's practical convictions. His insular government, in its present form, could not stand without it. The recognition of the equality in point of manhood, among all men, would disturb, perhaps shatter the whole order of English society and politics. The Church in England is most intensely English. Whatever is un-English remains outside the Church. That has now developed a power which already threatens the union of Church and State. Should it succeed in dissolving that union, it might possibly be the better for the Church. What she would lose in Anglicanism, she might gain in Catholicity. There is life and vigor enough in the English Church to take away all fear from disestablishment. She would adjust herself to her new conditions. Being free from the incubus of the "aristocratic fiction," she might learn, as some of her priests by pen and voice show that they are already learning, to respect the high-

est dignity of manhood. Should she then bring her great powers, accumulated learning, and indomitable spirit, into the level arena of the age as it is, she might take post in the front rank of progress. Keeping the One Faith prominent, as she surely would, she might, through a profounder than ever elucidation of the Incarnation, show herself, even more than she now does, a living Church in an evolving new era. The American Church, up to this time, has been little more than a reproduction in miniature of the English Church. She adheres to the very methods of her venerable mother. Consequently she has never taken hold broadly of the American character. She remains a very respectable, conservative, rather aristocratic, steadily growing exotic. America regards her with complacency; but never thinks of her in connection with the nation's evolution in this great era of progress.

The Protestant Sects in America are avowed allies of progress. They are not guiding it, however, much less ruling it; nor can they ever do so, as will appear when their fundamental principle and generally pervading characteristic comes under review. They have, however, a strong conviction of

the rights of personal man. It is a conviction of a truth, which is therefore a power. It is only a half-truth, and therefore a power that halts, abashed and perplexed, before inevitable difficulties. Unable to say anything more to man than that he is personally free, personally responsible to God, and in need of personal salvation, they are feeling the reaction of unlimited freedom and yielding up point after point of the One Faith. Not one of the Protestant Sects holds in full its Confession of Faith. No person among them feels confused, when his doctrine and practice are shown to be inconsistent with his own acknowledged standards of belief. The spirit of the age is driving the Sects toward the dead level of an Evangelical Alliance. They are busy in endeavoring to discover how much each one can give up to the other. The ideal before them is no longer, "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," but rather such a creed or no creed as no one will object to. The Protestant Sects are succumbing to the spirit of the age. In every direction they are yielding. In doctrine, discipline, and worship they are growing rapidly more and more unstable. Being children of the Reformation they are dying, as the

Reformation retires into the perspective, and fades into the past. Not that the Reformation was mortal and altogether of man ; but, although immortal in its essence and virile in its day, yet its day has gone by ; it has completed its God-given work, and now a new era supersedes it. The rights of personal man in the world and before God, with the correlative obligations of personal penitence and faith, can never cease to be great truths and duties. The Protestant Sects have done a good work in setting these points forth prominently. They wrought effectually in their time. They were especially needful as a reaction against mediævalism. Their "ideas" can never cease to be living forces. The time will never come when men shall cease to need personal penitence and faith, or cease to possess rightfully personal freedom. These sects are now, however, more impressed with their freedom, than by the duty of penitence and faith. They are wandering away from The Faith. They are looking at something else than human sinfulness and danger. Spiritual fears are becoming anachronisms. It would be impossible now to start a new sect, as the Methodists were started a hundred years ago, by an earnest call

to the multitudes "to flee from the wrath to come."

Is not that wrath possible? Is not the danger real? Should not men bow humbly before the Cross of Christ, and cry mightily, through Him, the Atonement and the Mediator, unto God, for salvation? Undoubtedly! The fact is, however, that this is not the whole Gospel. It was timely when the Protestant Sects sprang up. Whether it was wise for them to organize as they did, is not now a pressing question. They did organize, or rather perhaps they aggregated; and did what they could to meet the exigencies of the times. While the conviction of sin was general and popular and effective, they grew and flourished. Now that this conviction has grown less intense, less general and effective; the Protestant Sects feel their occupation gone. Their other and correlative "idea," of personal, human freedom, is a spirit that they have raised and cannot lay. They do not know what to do with it. They see where it will take them, if it becomes, as it is fast becoming, their "ruling idea," and they are helpless.

Now we begin to see why the Protestant Sects cannot give the right religious tone to the new

era ; and why they cannot guide the evolution of the living forces of that manifestation of the truth which is timely in this age. The fact is, they have been abstractionists from the beginning. All the truth they have held has been in abstract forms. They disregarded Church organization, and treated the very principle of organization as if it were, or might be made, a mere mode, which any set of men might devise, for convenience of co-operation, in promulgating a favorite doctrine. Hence the fundamental principle, and generally pervading characteristic of the Protestant Sects, leaves them helpless in the presence of personal liberty. They have nothing to answer to any man, who claims the right to think and do as he pleases.

The American Church is on a different ground. She does not discard the Reformation. Neither does she wholly discard Mediævalism. She holds on tenaciously to the good of both. Nor, yet again, does she hold that an eclectic mingling of Mediævalism and the Reformation would restore the whole Gospel, doctrinal and practical, and bring back the best modes of discipline, with the best forms of worship. No new era can be fitted with garments made up of patches from old vest-

ments. Mediævalism and the Reformation are sinking into the perspective of history. A living link comes up through them to join modern development. The one Truth of CHRIST, living in all the past, does not make the past live again out of its time; it only links the present to the past. When the American Church appreciates her position and her period, she will perceive that she has a special mission in and to this age. She has a commission to execute, whose text is the Incarnation. It is not—let it be over and over again repeated—a new truth. It has been known from the beginning of Christianity. Now, however, it comes to the front, as the specific truth that modern progress specifically needs.

This doctrine and fact recognizes personal human liberty, exalts the dignity of man; but it does both, not abstractly as if its whole force were in its "idea," but in concrete manifestation. God, in Christ, takes human nature into Himself, and infuses it with life divine.

The American Church may, as no other Body can, set forth, illustrate, and enforce this concrete fact. While listening with cordial sympathy to the free speech of modern man, and rejoicing in

the energy he is developing, she is not disturbed by his wilfulness, for she does not stand upon the foundation of his will. She is not a voluntary society, which he has made. She is a living Body, whether man approves or disapproves. She exists by Divine origination, and she persists in living and growing, because she is the Body in which Christ is evermore present. She claims this not merely as a distinction. She does not plume herself upon not being a religious sect. Would God that no religious sect would think of her in comparison with itself. She occupies another ground. The "idea" of her being is the concrete idea, not the abstract. Her doctrines flow into, through, and out of, her life. They do not constitute her being. The Incarnation, as a doctrine, follows upon the Incarnation as a fact. As a fact she lays it alongside modern personality and conscious liberty, and gives it as the explanation, the ground, the cause and the energy of personal freedom.

Whether men will hear or forbear, whether they treat the fact with respect or scorn, it is plain to common sense that this strong, prevalent sense of personal liberty and human dignity could not

have originated in man's own creative power. However he may thoughtlessly or wilfully appropriate it, and whatever excesses he may commit under it, every one who thinks must perceive that the basis of the assurance is not in man alone. Man is not sufficient unto himself. All mankind are insufficient, not only unto themselves, but all together are unable to satisfy any one man. All the world, all in it, all that it has ever contained, all that it may possibly accomplish and include, cannot satisfy completely one whole man. Hence this human sense of freedom came not from man, and is not a product of the world. It has therefore come to man. It has not been evolved out of him, though, being devolved upon and into him, it fills his whole being full, causing harmony within and without.

Now the Incarnation is the sole solution of this general consciousness, the single fact that explains and accounts for the Spirit of the Age. The Supreme—and at this point we need not even name Him—has so joined Himself to the very nature of man, that every man may stand forever in His own very presence, and retain there freedom of will with its consequent assurance of personal dig-

nity. However the idea of the Supreme may be translated, the result will be unchanged. If He be called God Almighty, His dignified creatures are not overwhelmed by His power. They consent to its exercise, and find themselves strong in cordial harmony with it. If He be called Father, men are His children by adoption, received into the communion of His family. His will becomes their will through filial love. His infinity, His majesty, His glory will not oppress them, because the reciprocity of love prevents all personal comparison. God's greatness and man's littleness, instead of standing over against each other in man's perception or thought, become known in the delight of personal communion. The Perfect One becomes the ever-flowing source, whence all the capacities of the creature are filled, while his aspirations cannot rise above the fountain that will forever satisfy and forever refresh them.

This is accomplished by organic operation. It is not the doctrine alone of the Incarnation that effects this. It is not the fact as an external reality. The fact and the doctrine both have their places and their uses. But it is the power of the reality, the power in operation, the power working

in the sub-conscious depths of the personal man, which produces the result.

Before proceeding further with this conception of the operation of the Incarnation, it may be well to refer to the power man has, and must have, because of his essential freedom, of thwarting for himself all the good and glory of it. The Incarnation cannot supersede human freedom, because God cannot lie. If it operated as a resistless force, and brought every man, willing or unwilling, unto the blessedness of salvation, it would destroy manhood. Freedom is an element of godlikeness. The human godlikeness belongs to the essence of human nature. The Incarnation cannot save that, which it would destroy in the very act of saving. Hence throughout this discussion, the whole notion of coercion—ingrained though it be in the current thought and popular philosophy, both common and learned, being known as "self-evolute law"—is simply discarded. Nay more, in the interests of humanity, in respect for human dignity, in consistence with conscious liberty, let an indignant protest be made against coercion! Though slaves are willing to submit to force, if they can gain thereby; though the common and learned philoso-

phy of this age endeavors to persuade men that they are mere subjects of force or "law," mere waifs driven about by inexorable evolution; yet Christianity comes to the rescue, and joins the age in its better consciousness and best hopes. She, and she alone, encourages man to respect himself, to cultivate manliness, to believe in freedom, and to work out, hopefully, the problem of progress on earth, and the higher—though essentially the same —problem of everlasting salvation. She presents to him the Incarnation; and will show him, if he will heed her, how it is the one solution of all human perplexities, the one sure link that binds together time and eternity, earth and heaven, man mortal and man immortal, through the union it effects forever between man and God. It effects this union organically, not merely in idea. It is a fact as well as a doctrine. It operates naturally, and when man impedes its natural action it provides sacramentally for his restoration.

Having sufficiently guarded against a dangerous side-issue, we may now return to the regular line of thought. The Incarnation is a potentiality, which man may, by free choice, make potent or impotent for his personal salvation. Man's free choice

implies conditions. As he did not make himself, he did not make his conditions. His creature-hood only asks the full-filling of his capacities, and a place for himself in a fitting environment. When a person becomes reasonable, justly weighs and measures himself, and duly considers his character and position, then the Church may begin to teach him doctrine. The fact and truths of the Divine revelation may be rightly divided for him according to his needs. His sins may be laid before him; penitence and faith enjoined; the "One full, perfect, and sufficient oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world" preached; the sacraments, with all the appointed means of grace, urged upon him; the rightful lordship of Jesus, acting in and through His visible Church on earth, may be declared and maintained. Indeed the whole line of Christian doctrine and practice may be unfolded. Everything that has been a foremost truth and prominent force in some past age may come up in its order. Thus, a well-furnished scribe, in the living Church, will bring forth things new and old, and the whole Gospel will live anew in the renewed man. Only let the due order be preserved. Let the Church of the present show

herself CHRIST'S present body, by putting forward that fact in His manifoldness, which is immediately effective, and shows Him to be ever present and ever speaking to living men in the line of that truth, to which their age is most alive and awake.

The Incarnation is not only individually operative, but generally operative also. It reaches not only every man, and saves every "man of good will," but it reaches the whole family of man, it penetrates humanity throughout, unimpeded by time or space. The human nature of Jesus is joined to the personality of the Infinite Son of the Infinite FATHER. Hence human nature is indissolubly linked to Omniscience, Omnipresence, Omnipotence, and Boundless love. We may, for clearness of understanding, conceive of these characteristics as if they were forces. Then it follows that all power, and glory, and beauty, and sweetness, are pouring into humanity from the Source of all. The advancement of humanity reacts through every member. Every man may be benefited, and every "man of good will" must be benefited, by whatever good humanity obtains. Here again is a wide field opened for showing forth the organic operation of the Incarnation. As

soon as it be entered upon, the veil of sin will be seen hanging in the way. The Incarnation itself will not save all mankind, and yet whatever persons it shall save, will be saved by organic operation. What organism, therefore, is there, or can there be, which consists with the fact of man's fall through misused liberty, and yet acts beneath his conscious will? Evidently the Incarnate One may take out of mankind, and organize into a Body communing with Himself, all those whom sin does not enslave. Every free man, who freely chooses GOD for His loved and loving LORD, may be joined to the new Divine organization. Through this organization the influences of the Incarnation, adapted to the needs of mankind at large, may find their way to every member of The Body.

This the Church in America can not only teach, but minister also. It has been taught before. It was the foremost truth of the Gospel in the mediæval age. It never can pass out of the Gospel. It should never be forgotten. In its due place at proper times it should be presented, urged, and put into practice. The sacraments, the priesthood, the memorial sacrifice, the communion of the saints, the ever-present Christ, the unseen

unity of the Militant Church with the Church in waiting, all these, with like realities and means of grace, are to be preached and used. Not a portion of the Gospel should be left out. It is all joined together. He, Who is Life, is in all; and dispenses His life through all. The Blessed SPIRIT, LORD Jehovah and Giver of life, now as ever, "receives of Mine and shall show it unto you." He is with the Incarnation now, as really as He was when He first gave conception to the ever-Blessed Virgin. He is the efficient cause; as the Incarnation, in itself, is the formal cause. They operate together. They operate together through the organism of "The Church, which is His Body." Baptism is a real ingrafting into "The Vine." The Eucharist is a real memorial offering unto GOD, and a real means—dispensed by Him—of feeding on Him, Who is the One Victim-Priest, and the very "true bread from Heaven." All this flows from the fact—as distinct, though inseparable, from the doctrine—of the Incarnation.

The mission of the American Church, specific as it evidently is, follows, in due historic order and connection, upon the specific mission of the Church in the age just past, as that did of the preceding,

and so on, in vital succession, back to the primitive era. Only let her recognize her calling, and show appreciation of her period and place. Whether the world recognizes, scorns, or ignores her high calling, it is nevertheless the fact that she is God's appointed minister in the world ; His chosen, sent, and accredited ambassador to mankind at large, and to personal men individually ; that she bears His commission to shed the light of His truth, and to treat with men respecting that allegiance which His honor demands and their normal development in salvation requires. She has intrusted to her the dispensation of those means of grace, which are effective through the Incarnation. However, therefore, she may be regarded by others, she can only be true to herself and faithful to her mission, when she stands upon her ambassadorial dignity, and loyally does her work in true charity.

Doubtless the actual man of the nineteenth century will be found very different from the ideal man of the age. The ideal is, however, the truly normal. The pressure of the world, the temptations of the devil, the imperfections of fallen human nature, are doing all they can, and have been for ages endeavoring, to lower the practical standard of ex-

cellence. The very dignity and freedom of godlike man show themselves in excesses of pride, self-will, and self-confidence, which make caricatures of glorious manhood. It is easy for artists, with pen or pencil, to ridicule all nobleness. The wiseacres of the times may scoff at the contrast between the actual and the ideal man. Neither the jokers nor the worldly wise can avoid testifying to the power, and hence the possible realization, of the ideal. The very jest of their pictures proves that a reality lies beneath them. The very force of their sneers arises from general knowledge that true nobility belongs to manhood, which the actual man might, if he would, exemplify.

The Church should be the defender and encourager of the men of her age. Faith in man is as truly a duty as faith in God. Without faith in man, it will be impossible to raise him ; as without faith in God, it is impossible to please him. God has not made man for naught. He gave him natural godlikeness, not that it should vanish in glittering ruin ; or float, an undeveloped nebula, in mere potentiality forever. He made man, what by nature he is, in order that all the potentialities of his being might become powers and realities in

fully developed human perfection. The Church, if she fulfils her mission, can save man from himself, raise him to a conception of his glorious liberty, induce him to despise scorn, impel him to trample down opposition, and encourage him, bravely and wisely, to attempt the attainment of restoration of that Divine likeness which he has foolishly and sinfully impaired, but not yet lost. A hopeful man is a strong man. He will use all his powers, and avail all his opportunities, for the realization of his hopes. He will fight, and toil, and endure, and wait, so long as hope continues. The higher his aim, the better his attainment! God will stand by him. Omnipotence will help him. Omniscience will guide him. Infinite love will refresh him. Success is sure. "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure!"

The Church, true to her mission, will not flatter the men of the age. She will show herself all the more man's friend and wise counsellor, by teaching him humility while encouraging his hope. While presenting the loftiest ideal of humanity, and urging every man to believe in the possibility of his

own realization of it, she will not omit to dwell upon his creaturehood, with its necessary dependence, nor hide the weakness which sin has added to his natural infirmities. She will glorify manhood as no school of philosophy can glorify it; but she will show its limitations also, and point out its disabilities. Some within her, and many around her, will make merchandise; indeed are making merchandise out of the spirit of the age. "They have men's persons in admiration because of advantage." They flatter man's dignity, and exaggerate his power, in order that he may fall into their nets. Perversions prove the pervertible. Because man may be fooled and cheated, he may also be exalted. His dignity and power are real. If many barter them away for fleeting attainment or the delectation of a moment, some will be thankful to the Church, which recognizes and honors them on the one hand, while on the other she faithfully shows the dangers in the path, and earnestly exhorts to watchfulness and humility.

Since the American Church is the ambassadorial organization to which God has given clear credentials, and, in His Providence, placed on this continent, launched indeed on the foremost wave

of modern progress, she should not only be true to the evolving ideal of that progress, but should also adapt her *methods* to the age. These methods belong to her threefoldness. They lie within her prophetical, priestly, and royal constitution. They are the forms into which must be cast her doctrine, worship, and discipline.

The specific doctrine she should present has been considered already in partial, though for the present perhaps sufficient, detail. When she perceives and accepts her specific doctrinal mission, she will have to consider what methods will best promote the work she has to do. No doubt even the formal pulpit discourses common in the existing "Protestant Episcopal Church," would be much improved by an infusion of the spirit of the age. The comparative few that hear sermons, and make up her conservative and highly respectable congregations, are, after all, living in this nineteenth century. They comprise men, and women, and children who are more or less imbued with current ideas and modes of thought. Some of them would perhaps be surprised, and recognize a marked change, if they should hear from the pulpit that God is riding through this age not in anger

but in love; not holding back the age, but impelling it forward; and that its very ideal is of Divine origin; while the fundamental doctrine of The Faith, the Incarnation, is the one best adapted to its guidance and instruction. The theological schools, through which the "Protestant Episcopal" clergy pass, may possibly have to enlarge their courses of study, and give training and instruction that will turn out students more nearly abreast the times.

Would the formal pulpit stand the strain? It does not now reach out to the multitude. It has not persuaded the masses, and probably cannot persuade them, to come in to it. It has become what it is by following a foreign example. It is Anglican to the core. It is a power, a noble power, a good power. It need not be superseded. It supplies a need, and will probably continue to do so for an actually increasing, though relatively to growth of population diminishing, body of church-goers. It must, however, be supplemented, in order to enable the American Church to lay her doctrine before the American people. The early Church made use of Evangelists. They were not a separate order in her ministry. The term de-

scribes a function, not an office. Sometimes Apostles acted as evangelists, sometimes presbyters, sometimes deacons. False evangelists made disturbances in the early Church. They might again. It would perhaps be unusually difficult now, in this country, to hold an army of them in order. They will have to be resorted to, however. Their methods are the only practicable ones by which to meet the exigences of the times. The Gospel must be carried out, as the lord's servants carried the invitation to the wedding. This American Church cannot prove herself the Church of Christ in America until she stands "in the open," as the witness for Christ, known and read of all men. If she hug her conservatism, if she hide much longer in her congregationalism, if she persist in a false decorum, if she will not go out into the highways and hedges, she may continue to appear, and perhaps grow to be, a mere denomination of Christians; but she cannot thus appear as the Body of Christ, commissioned as His ambassador, intrusted with His message, as well as the custodian of His means of grace to be dispensed now to this people.

An army of evangelists would be needed for this work. That army would have to be first recruited,

then drilled, then officered, then divided, posted, ordered, watched, helped, and renewed. It would cost immensely. The laity would have both to recruit and support it. No one doubts the ability of the laity to do both. They would have to enlarge their ideas of stewardship, before their ability would become available. The laity of the American Church have not been thus far wholly unmindful of their duty. They have not done it in anything like full measure. They have been slow perhaps to respond to many calls. But they have responded, often and well. They have done some noble works, and may be trusted to do more. Were the spirit of evangelism really to revive, duly evolve itself, and become a practical method in the American Church, the laity would not be the clogs on its chariot wheels. Their sons would respond to its spirit and fill the ranks of the preachers, while their own voluntary offerings, expanding under the same spirit, would feed, clothe, and shelter those whom God would call to the work.

Evangelism has appeared in every Christian age, and amid all peoples. In primitive times it worked in and with the Church. St. Paul had difficulties with it, but he never suppressed it. In mediæval

ages it gave birth to noble foreign missions ; while it reached also the people, as they otherwise were not and could not have been reached, through the preaching friars. At the Reformation it burst all barriers, and was sweeping over Europe like a flood, until a force like itself was used to check its wild flow, by Ignatius Loyola. Rome and the Protestant sects have both been too wise to attempt to suppress evangelism. The English Church has felt its throes, but has hitherto repressed them within her fold. When she could not resist or restrain evangelism she suffered it to pass out of her control. She might have held Methodism, and probably, if she now had the chance, would hold it, to the benefit both of it and of herself. She would gain in flexibility, while Methodism would be saved from that dreary doctrinalism, infected by emotionalism, which is already showing how vain it is to leave the sacramental system, which belongs to the Gospel as the living body belongs to the living soul. At first the Methodists retained the concrete conception of the Gospel, for they sent their converts to the Church for the sacraments. Now they have become saturated with the ultra-Protestant idea, that Christianity is merely doctrinal or emotional,

that is, in no essential respect, organic, that its sacraments are symbols merely and not actual means of grace. Hence the whole conception of the Church —as the veritable, living, historic, divinely indwelt Body of Christ—has passed quite away from both their conscience and their consciousness. They have no use for the fact, and no place for it in their doctrine, discipline, or worship. Like Romanism, Methodism has grown impregnable. Both stand indurated upon their fundamental half-truths. Neither seems to perceive how their structures lean over. They go on building, as if there was no spiritual law corresponding to the law of gravitation. They evidently forget that ruin must come at last to every leaning tower, when its centre of weight shall overhang a line of gravity outside its base.

No doubt history is full of the extravagances of evangelism. It has undoubtedly worked dire mischief as well as great good. It is, however, irrepressible. It is one of those forces which belong to the very life of Christianity. Sometimes it may be less needed than at others; but it can never be wholly inactive. It never should be left to its own devices alone; but, on the other hand, it would be

as easy to sweep back with brooms the rising tide, as to stop its flow when once it sets in.

Evangelism has been tried in many ways outside the Church. It has proved itself a power many times already within living memory. It is even now proving itself a power. The Salvation Army, partly because of, and partly in spite of, its queer ritual, has reached the masses. Moody and Sankey have drawn crowds. They are in earnest. But their work is dissipated. Not only that, it affects the soil of religion in men's souls very much as undue stimulation of the material soil affects the earth. It makes it harder afterward to grow ordinary crops. This is an evil that inheres in the evangelistic method. It would appear in an evangelism which the Church might set into operation. Evangelism is, however, a necessity, because the masses will not come into ordinary congregations ; at least not until their religious instinct has been aroused, and an interest in the work of their own salvation has supervened.

An effectively working evangelism, under the guidance of the Church, would always have the Church at its back. This would counteract its extravagances, and supply a place of retreat. Its

converts would not have to be left to wander hither and thither in search of a resting-place. It would be provided for them. They would obtain within the Church just that definite and fixed status, which would best preserve their conversion. The regular services of the Church would advance their mere first turning to God, through a regular progress, into a progressive conversion from sin to holiness. The necessity of evangelistic methods cannot be avoided. In some form it will show itself. The question is not between evangelism and no evangelism. It is simply a question whether the Church will make use of it, and turn it to good account; or leave it outside, to develop abnormally and wildly.

Doubtless, within the Church, it would take on various forms. The Ritualists would be sure to take a hand in it. Those to whom all fixed ritual seems a hindrance would take up their share of the work. Between these two extremes many varieties of ways would be used. The Church is just the body which can hold both these extremes together, and join them with all between. She is the only organization that can do so. Because she is the old Church—ever young—because she has

all history in her constitution, she can see any period reproduced without trembling. She is not afraid of a revival of mediævalism. She is quite ready to encourage a revival of whatever is good, in sound views of the priestly office, of the sacraments, of the organic unity of the Body of Christ, and of her rightful authority. She is not afraid of the old ideas of the Reformation. She is in full sympathy with all that was true and good in that movement. Personal responsibility, of every personal man directly to God, she holds as clearly, and urges as strenuously, as the severest Protestant can desire. Her evangelists may adopt either Protestant or mediæval methods, or any modification of either. She can embrace all earnest workers. Her Divine organization, because it is Divine, is flexible. For the same reason, it is sure and steadfast. Those who trust her may banish timidity. She will show herself equal to every emergency. She will not be disintegrated, she will only be enlarged, by giving free scope to every variety of good and true methods.

The "dearly beloved brethren," who have been long accustomed to that little Protestant sermonette which begins the order of Morning or Even-

ing Prayer, may continue to enjoy their accustomed preliminary exhortation. Evangelism need not supersede the established devotional customs. The small congregations that enjoy them could continue in their usual decorum. Should any parish have its own specifically evangelistic mission, it would stand behind, in good order and stability. It would recruit its own numbers, or start new parishes, with those thus drawn into the Church. Even should a reaction cause some new flexibility to enter into the modes of Common Prayer, the efficiency of ordinary forms might not be impaired. Many new converts would develop a taste for that decorum, which is a good thing where it is not the chief thing. They might help liturgical enrichment by the tastes they would bring in. A Catholic body need not fear variety. The Catholic spirit will readily embrace variety, while, at the same time, its instincts will curb precipitous changes and prevent excesses.

A definite plan of evangelistic work need not be suggested. That may be safely left to Bishops, aided by their parochial clergy. The only point insisted upon is that the Church, with her present methods, does not and cannot express, much less

fulfil, her mission in America. Evangelism is the mode by which she can so expand and become so flexible as to effect that object. Evangelism is no novelty. It was the Church's own early method. She has suffered it to pass beyond her control. She need only resume her own. She will have to train her evangelists. Why should not her theological schools provide them, as they now do parochial clergy? The theological schools of the Church in America are sending forth enough already to supply the parochial demand. Missions, under the parochial system, do not grow very fast. There is no probability of an immediate, or very near, demand for any great increase of parish ministers. There is no limit, however, to the requirements of evangelism. If the Church awakens to her duty in this land and age, she will see the need at once of a resort to evangelism. When she has organized, or even recognized the necessity of organizing, an evangelistic system, there will be a practically unlimited field opened at once all through and all around her. Both within and outside the parishes, her Lord may be trusted to send the laborers, if she will only show them their work, prepare them for it, and help them do it.

Preaching evangelists must have some forms of worship. What shall they be?

The accustomed forms of "settled parishes" are well enough in their places; or, it may be hoped, will become satisfactory, after they have been enriched and made flexible. They would be a burden, if imposed upon the evangelists, who will have to act like the advanced line of skirmishers in a battle. May not our Bishops be trusted to devise services that would be a help and not a hindrance? May not our parochial clergy, under Episcopal direction, or by Episcopal license, open their churches "out of hours," and devise some easy, popular services? What if preaching precede prayer and praise? We are already accustomed to that. Our regular congregations always get, first a text and then a little sermon adapted to any text; before they make confession, receive absolution, and proceed to praise and pray. Possibly, well-trained evangelists might devise as appropriate and effective a sermon as that which always begins with, "Dearly beloved brethren, the Scripture moveth us." Perhaps they might say, "Dearly beloved men, whom God made after His own likeness, hear what He has to say to you in

this your mortal life of toil and pleasure, gain and loss, health and sickness, hope and disappointment. He offers you the adoption of sons. His own Son has become, now is, and ever will continue one of you. Learn to be like Him, that you may thereby grow up after the true pattern of manliness, and so find and be filled with a satisfaction that the world cannot give you, and that you will never find except in Him." This is the key-note of the living Gospel, the specific portion of the One Faith that should be put foremost in this age. All earnest human hearts will drink this in with avidity. It will prepare them for the other truths of the whole Gospel. Show them the FATHER, as He is manifested in Jesus! Their whole persons, sharing humanity in common with Christ, will respond to the touch of sympathy. They may then be easily led on to confession, taught to receive gladly the "declaration of absolution," and guided through prayer and praise be brought finally to the feast on "that Bread which cometh down from Heaven." "Our incomparable Liturgy" would not be endangered. It is, in its essence, the heritage of the ages. Some of the incongruities of "The Book of Common Prayer," which were im-

ported into England from the Continent about three hundred years ago, might indeed be remedied. Some dislocations, effected by the same unskilful hands, might be restored. The Liturgy would become thus much richer and more flexible than it is now. The body of it, however, would remain, living and giving life to worshippers who are settled in its ways. Every liturgical student discovers the primitive origin of the Liturgy. Its central essence took a fixed form in the days of inspiration. St. Paul was familiar with the primitive liturgies. He, the noblest of the evangelists, evidently regarded them as given of the Spirit. An effective and churchly evangelism will lead up to the Liturgies. Converts, through evangelism, will drift naturally into regular ways of liturgic worship. The Liturgy gives the "strong meat" of devotion, that "belongeth to them that are of a full habit, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14). Out of the Liturgy has grown Morning and Evening Prayer, and the occasional Offices. Out of it would readily grow varied and flexible evangelistic services. They would be helps to each other, meet either one for its own occasion, while

both would develop in harmony. Possibly much of the popular objection to fixed forms of Public Worship may have proceeded from premature attempts to enforce them. The groping after them, which now and then appears among the Protestant Denominations, is evidence that they meet a devotional longing. A working evangelism, while it might sometimes resort to extempore prayers, and thus take away that which to some is a reproach, would only thereby bring into contrast the old way and the new. "Liturgic use" has nothing to fear from comparison and trial on open fields. With prejudice disarmed the better way would assert itself, and thus, more easily and generally, be followed. Might not "the Churches of the Reformation," seeing thus their good recognized, be led to regard more favorably the Church that cometh down from the primitive age? Might they not cease to look upon her as an arrogant exclusive? Instead of continuing to regard her as one of themselves, only making herself offensive by assumption, might they not learn that she is not the child of the Reformation, nor of Mediævalism, nor of the Primitive Age, but is the Family which, alive at the beginning of and throughout all three

eras, is still alive in this era, and ready with her message? Thus, perceiving the Catholicity of the Church, might not earnest souls, from every quarter, flock to her, saying, "We will go with you, for we have seen that God is with you"? Evangelism might help to break down "the middle wall of partition," and thus not only be an effective missionary system to act directly on the world, but a channel of Christian reunion, a healer of breaches, "a restorer of the paths to dwell in."

Discipline would perhaps be more difficult even than now, if Evangelism were a recognized method. The history of the Church does not, however, tell very favorably for discipline. Even heresies were not cured by discipline. In spite of discipline, they have usually fought their way, and ceased at last, not because they were suppressed, but because they were brought out, developed, and cast off. They were like vicious humors in the vital circulation of a living body. Suppressed, they continue as poison in the blood. Brought to the surface, they suppurate of themselves, slough away, and cease to be. The great pulsations of the healthful Body of CHRIST may be trusted to effect what discipline, directed by human wisdom, would be in-

competent to accomplish. We need not fear a vigorous Evangelism. Its erratic tendencies would ever exist in connection with a strong Catholic conservatism. The risk would be compensated by the energy. The Body, in which Christ dwells evermore, and wherein The Spirit is ever active, can afford to take any risks that come in the very line of increasing efficiency. Abounding spiritual life in the Body assures soundness in the faith, with well-controlled vigor in good works, and a devotion that includes praying with the understanding.

If the best wisdom of the Church should so enjoin, a tentative system of evangelism might be at first devised. Probably such a tentative system, if any, would be enjoined. There is much to be said in its favor. It matters little how many checks and balances may be set upon Evangelism. If the principle be allowed, and the method tried at all, all needful facilities would grow of themselves. Going forth into the highways and hedges of modern progress, and carrying, to the ears of this earnest age and people, the invitation of the Gospel, Evangelists would first effect a hearing. The orderly spirit of the Church would not desert them. That very spirit would give them an advantage

over unchurchly evangelists. Their zeal would be tempered by more than personal discretion. They would have always at their back the staid order and decorum of congregations of worshippers, who have been trained after old forms of prayer and praise. The two would operate on each other with reciprocal benefit. *This* would be quickened in zeal, and enlarged in scope; while *that* would be held back from extravagance.

Upon the whole, if the American Church be true to her origin and her history; if she show herself a living member of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church; if she take her rightful place on this Continent in this new Era, she will not much longer dally with her burthensome, sect-like name. Before changing it, however, she may need a more general acceptance, and a deeper self-consciousness, of the fact that she is not a sect; that she is not a voluntary association entirely; that she did not grow out of a doctrine, or a set of doctrines; that she is not the evolute result of abstract force or ideas. She should manifest rather than assert that she is a veritable living organism, growing out of Christ The Vine, instinct with His life, dispensing grace by His appointment, showing

forth His truth rightly divided, and bearing the Witness, here and now, which proves her a link in the unrolling endless chain of the old yet ever new Gospel. Thus she would fulfil her timely mission, as Christ's Messenger to this age. Then she might embody her mission in her name, and call herself —constrained by her vocation and with largest charity—the American Church.

In what relation should she stand to the Protestant Denominations who were born of the Reformation? In what relation should she stand to the Roman Communion, which is encased in Mediævalism as in adamantine armor, and penetrated through and through with mediæval theology and methods of worship, and applies even mediæval discipline, whenever and however she can, to this recalcitrant era? The American Church acknowledges, because she herself holds, both the truths and both the energies which Mediævalism and the Reformation hold respectively. The latter held them in opposition to each other. They are still held in opposition. Protestantism and Romanism cannot coalesce. They are blind to each other's right and truth. Each thinks it is doing God service, by strenuously opposing the other. The

American Church cannot take sides with either. She rejects the errors of both; but she holds the truth that either opposes. She has to reconcile this dual truth, and thus teach it. She must set forth personal human freedom, with consequent immediate responsibility to God, including the duty of personal penitence, with faith in the One Sacrifice and Mediator. She must also maintain the present existence, in effective operation, of the One Organic Body of Christ; into which all who would be saved should come, that, "in the communion of the saints," they, becoming members one of another in Christ, may be fed upon The True Sacrifice, and nourished up into everlasting life.

Some measure of controversy may have been, and may yet continue needful, in order to set forth her position. But there is something which should lie behind the spirit of controversy; something even deeper than the sense of duty to contend earnestly for the faith. Those against whom controversy may be waged are the very ones the Church is sent to win. They are godlike human persons, every one of whom God loves. The something, deeper than the controversial spirit, is now apparent. The love of God for the "world,"

including all living mankind, should shine like light through His Church. His grace will cause it to permeate His Church. It may prove a difficult principle to reproduce, in this critical and individualistic age, as well as a spirit hard to cultivate, and one not easy to apply in detail. In the first place, it will cut out every root of sectarian confidence and pride. It will not subsist with arrogant assumptions over "the Protestant denominations," nor with scornful rebuttal of the claims of Romanism. It will subsist, however, with firm adherence to the whole Gospel, in the unbroken Church; provided that adherence be pervaded by such love divine, as would win rather than conquer; would pity, with a true humility and self-distrust, while going steadily on in the old ways with open arms stretched everywhere to receive all the children of God. In a word, the spirit and life of CHRIST should be most manifest in His Body. Nor is this a truism. It is by no means a settled practical conviction, and strong, deep assurance, in the American Church; that she is the one Living Body, intrusted with the Gospel, to whom is committed the appointed Witness, that should be borne to God in Christ, on this continent in this era.

The commoner feeling is that she shares this mission; being herself only a more perfect branch, among other less perfect branches, of the One Vine. This is simply an abandonment of the whole principle. Christ's own Body, the Church, exists somewhere, now in America. His great promise to indwell personally His Body and His people has not failed. Hence it is the duty of every man, who would be saved, to seek and find and join this body. The whole of the most needful organic operation of grace in every convert is to be obtained through the means of grace, which are found in The Body. One may have a large amount of truth, much wisdom, and many virtues, outside the Church; but he can only be assured of grafting into Christ by the Baptism which Christ imparts in connection with the Sacrament He instituted; and he can only partake of the nutrition needful for his own personal eternal life, by feeding upon the Sacrifice, where and as Christ Himself imparts it.

All this is not merely ideal, as Protestantism pure and simple now generally teaches, and as popular, religious, metaphysical philosophers inculcate. Nor is it merely material, and mechan-

ical, as those at least virtually teach, who regard the Church as a mere rigid mould, into which every person is to be compressed, with personality squeezed out, that he may be laid away in a horrible wall of saved human creatures, only saved by having everything in them worth saving crushed in the act.

When the American Church shall have become pervaded by a true apprehension of her position and her calling, every man in her, who appreciates that position and calling, will stand in awe at the conception that must fill his soul. He will contend indeed for the whole—internal and external, implicit and explicit, doctrinal and organic—"faith once for all delivered to the saints;" but he will do so as "those who bear the vessels of the Lord." The pride of sect will have no place in him. Comparison of the Church with any or all other institutions will not rise in his mind. Whatever good or great things they may be doing, he will rejoice in as a religious and sympathetic man. But the thought of their organizations or rather aggregations in comparison with The Body of Christ will never weigh upon his mind. Nor will he think of the Church as his own, but rather of himself as

hers. To all mankind her arms will be outstretched. Every man of good will may, without respect of persons, be gathered into the Divine-human embrace of her Blessed Lord, the One Godman.

It is difficult to describe that firmness of conviction, that tenderness of charity, that coolness of wise judgment, that resolute determination, that untiring zeal, that assurance of faith, that confidence of hope with patient waiting on the Lord, which should, distinctively and in unison, pervade the Church and appear in her members, while they take this apparently exclusive but really comprehensive position. If the Gospel were a nebula of unformed truth, floating like mist amid the truths of science or philosophy, then every man would be free to absorb it by himself, and form any associations, calling them churches or whatever else he would. To these associations would then be committed whatever witness for God is to be borne, in this era and region. But the Gospel never was such a nebula. It was never truth alone, as truth is commonly understood, *i.e.*, abstract truth. It is not addressed to the mind solely. It came, comes, and ever will come, to man, or-

ganized as a thing of life. It begins with raising out of the "death in trespasses and sins." It imparts the new life. It nurtures this life by means which are outward visible signs of inward spiritual grace. Then it teaches the truth, both dogmatically and philosophically, addressing both faith and reason. It does not hide this truth, nor keep back any portion for esoteric use. It is all open, but it is inseparable from its own foundation. They only can hear it, with understanding heart, who take it in connection with its original supports. It may distinguish between, but it does not vainly attempt to divide the inseparable.

Obviously, such a system must be a definite unit, having an organism that began with Christ Himself and still remains, complete yet progressive. Its officers, priests, ministers, whatever they may be named, must derive their respective positions, with their relative authority, in unbroken line of descent. The means of grace they dispense must be the same from the beginning; while the truth they set forth is one in essential reality, whatever part of it be presented in rightly dividing it according to the needs of the day.

This, or religious Chaos! There is no middle

ground to stand upon. The American Church is the embodied Gospel, now living, now acting, now making up the items of her glorious or fearful final account; or she is the veriest sham that ever paraded her own shame. Although such terms of contrast make one shudder, they are necessary in this period of false liberality; in this place and time wherein men are easily, and with apparent willingness, cheated into slavery, by lying promises of liberty. The American Church, in the very interests of human liberty, in the very exercise of a true liberality toward man and before God, must take her single ground alone. She must hold up the Gospel in its completeness, as the witness which God requires, now as ever, and as the one way of salvation.

If enough has been said to show the unique position of the American Church, her mission will stand out vividly. Something has been said of her methods. Suggestions have been offered for enlargements of those methods. They have been presented not as if they covered the whole ground. Methods must evolve themselves. Exigencies may require them to vary. The one point, to which special attention is besought, is that the American

Church be enlarged, under a sense of her singular mission, with its consequent responsibilities. She is not a sect, and therefore cannot divide her mission with others, nor throw off on them a portion of her responsibilities. She must therefore so enlarge her borders, increase the number of her ways, and multiply her means, that every true disciple of Christ may find his own place in her communion.

It may not be out of place just here to note some "signs of the times." Let one suffice, and that within the Church. It is like an antiphon. The Bishop of Kansas, from one side of the vast circumference of the Catholic Faith, strikes a note; and from far the other side the ringing voice of Dr. J. H. Hopkins responds. The two tones float together in harmony. Both would have the "Church comprehensive." Neither would impair the fulness of her faith, nor break the continuous integrity of her order. Yet both the "low churchman" and the "high churchman" would spread the mantle of the Church, in charity, over whoever would work faithfully in her communion and ministry; even though they might pronounce Apostolic Succession, sacramental grace, sacrificial worship, priestly service, or any other old "articulum

stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ," with or without the aspirate.[1] Have we not, already in the Church, men of all schools of theology? Have we kept out, can we keep out, ought we to try to keep out, differences of opinion? Can controversy be suppressed? Has it not appeared in all times and places? Has it not raged sometimes within the Church? Have the angels yet bound up the tares for burning; or gathered the good fish out of the drawn net and thrown the bad away? Can men, either in ecclesiastical courts or in the narrow confines of sects, do this angels' work?

No one need fear for the Church. She is Christ's own. She lives, and will continue to live, because He lives in Her. She will live only the more vigorously when all her functions become active. Like the living mortal body, she is in danger of suffering from maladies. They may appear in any of her organs. But, like the healthy body, she can throw out disease, either to the surface where it will slough away, or by local cure.

[1] The Comprehensive Church. By the Rt. Rev. Thomas H. Vail, D.D., LL.D. New York: Thomas Whittaker, 1883.—Sermon by Dr. Hopkins in Narrative of Jubilee Services in Trinity Parish. New York: James Pott, 1882.

She invites spiritual disease, by binding up her limbs, or by compressing her organs in straitlaces, or by refusing due exercise to her functions. She has room for learned doctors, who may not all agree. She has room for Liturgists and extempore pray-ers, and for all between them, with ample fields where all can work, and not crowd one another. A compulsory liturgy might repel some good, simple souls. A Liturgy, which is a heritage from primitive ages, enriched as it came along down to us, will win its own way to general adoption, if only it be left to work, without too heavy canonical impediments, and to exert freely its own influence. The Church has room for all who accept the Faith, however they favor or disapprove some explicit definitions. They may be drawn, some toward primitive expressions of doctrine, some toward mediæval mysticism with its truths about priesthood and sacraments, some toward the glorious Reformation, while some may take most interest in the living thought of the day as illumined by the Gospel. Surely the Church, in embracing all schools, need not commit herself to any. In a household, differences of views among the children need only make family life more pi-

quant and vigorous. Why may not God's family, the Church, live, among breezes of discussion and amid varying methods of work and worship, without imperilling her orderly existence? May not Christians know one another better, and love more, within the Church, when she is not afraid to "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"?

Should an increasing intensity of Church-consciousness, with a consequent sense of responsibility, which can neither be escaped nor shared with "other denominations," pervade the whole American Church, doubtless dangers would arise. The Anglicans among us would fear the utter disruption of all conservatism. The Sectarians among us would fear the growth of ecclesiastical arrogance. The Ritualist on one extreme, and the Broad-churchman on the other, would be glad of the free and open field, in which either could advocate with the least restraint his own peculiar views, and practice his special methods. No doubt every person, and every school that possesses life and energy, would evolve freely in the Church if, feeling the full impulse of her Catholicity, she should become, without fear or amazement, "Compre-

hensive." It should be remembered that every one of the tendencies named, with others that might be named, exist already in the American Church. She cannot keep them out, nor can she suppress them. They exist, because of the diversities of men's minds. They will exist so long as those diversities continue. Should they cease, it would be a sad time, because their cessation would not evince unity, but rather torpidity. Every one of these tendencies is toward error in doctrine or fault in practice. Every one of them has a true doctrine behind it, and may do much good in its own way. If their possessors recognized each other as legitimate, and left each other free, they would exercise an invaluable influence upon each other toward reciprocal adjustment. They could all work in sympathy, if not in unison; while the world would probably see a growth, certainly not a diminution, of reciprocal love and charity.

We do not fully appreciate that delicate and mighty force of self-preservation, which exists in the Living Body of CHRIST. Because the Church is that Living Body, and the American Church a "living member of the same," she does not need the coddling of timid nurses. She can be trusted

to preserve her own spiritual health, her own Divine, organic order, her own "trust" of the Gospel; while she leaves her children at liberty to serve God, after the dictates of their own consciences, and according to the methods of their best judgment.

Many doubtless would think they saw in free enlargement a tendency toward such disruption of ties and license of proceedings, as occur where "every man does that which is right in his own eyes." Every advocacy of increased liberty has to meet just this charge of extravagance. The best answer is silence. A churchman, who would see the Church imbued with the Catholic spirit, and filled with the assurance that springs from realization that "God is in her of a truth," is not therefore regardless of her high duty to "do all things decently and in order." There is no incompatibility, but rather a deep and pervading unity, between the soundest orthodoxy and the freest criticism, between the surest conservatism and the largest stretch of reasonable liberty.

The Spirit of God is undoubtedly working in Christian bodies, whose methods are not those which bind the American Church hard and fast,

with a triple cord of canon, rubric, and prevalent sentiment. Shall we cut this cord, and fly apart into any accidental ecclesiastical combinations? By no means. We might, however, at least recognize the fact, that the Holy Spirit does not limit His graces to those who are wrapped together by this cord. Is not this proof that the Catholicity of the American Church is contracted by it? Does not therefore the fulfilment of her true mission demand that it be relaxed? If it should be relaxed, who can tell what the tendencies toward union, which appear in all Christian bodies, might effect? The Sectarian spirit is weakening rapidly among the Christian, Protestant Sects. Their Evangelical Alliances show this. Their most able minds and earnest souls are continually giving expression to a longing after Christian Unity. The chief difficulty in their way is in the one-idea which dominates them, because it was the one-idea of the Reformation from which they have all sprung. They have lost the conception of the concrete truth. They retain only the conception of the abstract truth. They do not consider the Gospel as both an organism and a faith. They think it a faith only; and they hold to their organizations, as

if they were in fact or could be in verity the mere evolutions of the faith of their members.

The mission of the American Church toward the Protestant Sects, whom the Spirit of God does not disdain, is to endeavor to restore the "one-idea" which in horror or fear of Romanism they at first undervalued and now have lost. The American Church, having no fear of Romanism and retaining what is true and good in it, is not disturbed by its claims to exclusive Catholicity. She declares, by unmistakable utterances and acts, that the Body of Christ originated historically with Christ, that it has been preserved in Divine order transmitted unbroken through all the historic ages, that it possesses a true priesthood which offers the one memorial sacrifice continually and feeds the faithful upon the veritable "Bread of Heaven," that her LORD is ever with her, and, as St. John the Baptist said, and St. John the Evangelist recorded, "He is the Baptizer with the Holy GHOST" (i. 33).

Because of this dual unity, of abstract faith with concrete organization, the American Church cannot fraternize with the Protestant Sects. She cannot join their alliances. She cannot effect a reciprocal compromise. The only attempt, that was

ever seriously made to effect it, resulted in the formation of a new and most feeble sect. Still union is not only desirable but longed for. It is a pity, a shame, a grief, a weakness, and a guilt, that those with whom God's Spirit plainly dwells should not also dwell together in Christian love, communion, and harmony of action.

The cast-iron methods of the American Church are her chief impediments against fulfilling, as she ought, her mission to the Protestant Sects. Those methods remain inflexible because of the sectarian spirit in the Church. If the Catholic sense could exorcise the sectarian spirit, at once the duty would be apparent to impose only such methods as the One Faith, the Divine Order, and true Charity imperatively demand. The duty before God and man, to set forth in its completeness the full witness of the Gospel, if it pervaded and dominated the American Church, would lay upon all consciences the imperative obligation to allow any methods to be freely used, which are innocent in character, by any duly authorized ministers, who could work best under those methods. The Protestant Sects would then see, what they cannot now see, viz.: that the difference between them and

the Church is just what the term church expresses. Their attention would be drawn to the real difference, and the question of unity would be reduced to a single issue.

That issue would not lie between one sect and many others. It would not involve a question of superiority between ecclesiastical claimants. It would not even be "Which is the better organization for promoting all the ends of the Gospel?" It would be a simple question of testamentary rights. The present administrators of the American Church do not *own* her. She is committed to them in trust. She is, now and here, the embodiment of the concrete Gospel of the living Christ. The word she preaches, the sacraments she administers, the means of grace she dispenses, as well as the dignity of ambassadorship, with the mission to glorify God and promote human advancement with man's salvation, are all trusts. Every true and sincere disciple of Jesus has a right to them. As an heir of God he should enter into his inheritance. The administrators of the Divine Testament have no right to enforce arbitrary conditions. Only those which the devising instrument itself specifies, or the mere necessities of ad-

ministration require, should be imposed. If the authorities in the American Church impose any more, they are unfaithful to their trust; they are even withholding Divine rights; they are acting as if the Church were theirs, and not the Lord's. In fact He has intrusted it to them for the glory of His name, through the widest possible diffusion of its blessings, in this age, amid this people.

The chief reason why this duty of proper administration is not generally felt, or at least not duly operative in the Church, is, that sectarian feeling represses the Catholic instinct. It is really so necessary to defend the Catholic claim of the American Church, that the "idea" of it has hardly yet left the murky regions of controversy. The Protestant Sects are not much interested now in the controversy, because in fact they have lost almost entirely the church-concept. They have so drifted along with the tide of the philosophy of the abstract, which is the ruling philosophy of the day, that they have practically eliminated from the Gospel all, except its doctrines, sentiments, and impalpable spiritualism. The work of the Church is, among other things, to check this flood of mere abstraction, to show forth the concrete truth in the,

now as ever, living Body of Christ. This she can do most effectually, not by controversy, but by a living work after her kind. The whole truth in Jesus, the organic and the didactic together, that which brings grace and that which gives instruction, should be presented, as by those to whom a solemn trust is committed, and on whom an imperative obligation is laid, of right and free and liberal administration.

In all methods, whether touching doctrine, worship, or discipline, the clear duty of the American Church is to impose only what can be shown to consist with clearest Divine warrant, or with most absolute natural conditions. Large-mindedness, sensitiveness of perception, deep charity, quick and profound human sympathy, indeed all the Christian virtues, imbued by grace and filled with the wisdom that cometh down from above, will be drawn upon, by those who endeavor honestly to administer the trust of the American Church, in this land, at this time. But she is a veritable "member of Christ." He has called, commissioned, and sent her. She is His, and He is surely in her, and His Spirit certainly inspires her for all the needs of her position and her work. Let her

children realize her dignity, and her high vocation, as well as their own humble place in her as stewards!

Should the administrators of the American Church take single position on her Catholic ground, they would not find themselves in a post of ease. Of course they would be misunderstood, suspected of arrogance, charged with vain assumptions, probably played off by scoffers one against another, if they should appear to differ in any point of principle, or even detail of practice. Indeed the very "Christian Bodies," for whose sake in love, respect, and longing they might wish to enlarge borders, to lengthen cords and strengthen stakes, might themselves repel approaches. God Himself might try their faith, by letting their works remain for a time apparently unfruitful. These things, in like manner, have happened before. The history of the Church, like private Christian experience, shows that duty is to be done, and the result not anxiously regarded. The faithful, while aware of difficulties and dangers, nevertheless go forward. The only question with them is, "What is truth?" with its corollary, "What is duty?" In the past, "boldness in Christ" has not been lost. It has led, through trial indeed, on to victory. One can

hardly prophesy in what manner the Catholic administration of the American Church would promote Christian unity. One can safely prophesy, however, that it would do so in some manner, because all faithful souls are more or less imbued with the Spirit of Christ, and where that Spirit is there is liberty; while the only true liberty is that wherewith Christ hath made us free by His very Incarnation, and applied through the union and communion of His One Body.

The utmost possible liberty in non-essentials, which the American Church, when true to her Catholic instinct, will both give and claim, will of course be accompanied by strenuous adherence to unity in essentials. She dare not compromise in a case of trust. What is committed to her she must hold and dispense, according to the terms of her trust. Hence the sectarian principle of reciprocal accommodation can never, in the very interest of those she would benefit, be suffered to trench upon the boundaries of the whole, compact, and organic truth. Those who are imbued with the Spirit of Christ will desire no more. There is safety for all only in the "truth as it is in Jesus," in the "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Permanent unity

can continue only on the broad, but defined, "One Foundation." The Catholic instinct, and single-minded adherence to the unity of the truth, are correlatives. Both can live and flourish together. Neither can live long alone. Careful discrimination in judgment, clear knowledge of facts, the most expansive charity, with much of the wisdom which is from above, will be required in the Church, should she enter in earnest upon this work of Catholic reform; but He, Who is her life, will not fail her. Surely the Church, as a body, may lay this promise as an unction to her soul, "As thy days so shall thy strength be."

Upon the whole, it may be observed, that the position of the American Church is not without parallel. It is definite indeed and distinct. She has a field and a period all her own; but the era, in which her mission lies, is only one among the many eras, which, like separate links in an unbroken chain, reach from the primitive age on into this nineteenth century. Every era has laid its specific duty upon the Church. She has fulfilled her mission, in some measure at least, in all the past. One after another of the great facts and truths of the powerful Gospel have been brought

by her to the front; while their presentation, elucidation, adaptation to the needs of the times, and final explicit definition, have been the fulfilment of her mission. She has never made nor suffered separation from the line of the unity of truth. She has held on to all the treasures of wisdom and doctrine, which have been forged into forms of golden links, and passed along unbroken; but, in every era, she has been chiefly occupied with her own link, she has been busy with that part of the truth which her own age specifically demanded.

The present era, wherein personality and freedom are the "ruling ideas," calls, as we have seen, for that portion of truth, committed in trust to the Church, which centres in the Incarnation. All the "truth as it is in Jesus" is joined to it. Its presentation, in the front, does not separate it from the whole Catholic faith. The Catholic faith is commended, and its Catholicity proved by having always some point to offer, which is exactly adapted to "the exigencies of the times." The power of the fact, and the current adaptability of the doctrine, of the Incarnation cannot be questioned. It is God's own loving response to this era. His own likeness is working, in the foremost

thinkers and actors of the age. They do not all know the power that moves them. Many, in all classes, many especially among the learned critics and daring philosophers with which this era abounds, appear to be quite unconscious of the force that is moving them. They do not think duly of God, many even deny Him, many more will not have Him in all their thoughts. They none the less, however, manifest the idea which He is evolving in current history. It is the individualistic era. Individualism alone is an abstraction, and therefore cannot persist by itself, because all persistent existence is concrete. The individual is a member of an organic body. Viewed apart, individualism appears like a stormy chaos, lightened by lurid fires from the pit, and rolling on in hopelessness toward some dark void unknown. And yet individuals are personal men, in whom, as distinct persons, the image of God is reflected; nay, more than reflected, in whom the image of God naturally dwells. Man is intrusted with this image. He may mar it, but he cannot destroy it. He cannot escape from it. It has we know not what possibilities of defacement. It certainly has unlimited possibilities, of ever-ex-

panding enlargement toward the Infinite. It has this in true organic union with its kind, as well as in specific peculiarities of its own.

When the Church in this era shall have duly recognized her current mission, she will divide the truth she holds in trust so as to present to modern man that part of it which he now most needs. Then will she herself be felt more, and recognized, as a living power. She cannot be remanded to a limbo of the past, when she shows that she is in heartiest sympathy with her age, and has just the truth to offer which this age now most needs. What school of philosophers is so true to man as she is when she tells him of his godlikeness? What society for emancipation can work for liberty as she can when she tells man that he may be free forever in God's own presence, because God Himself has taken human nature into Himself forever, so that satisfaction may dwell in man by means of profoundest union and communion with God. Not by command shall saved men be ruled. Not by compulsion shall free wills be subdued. Not by force of abstract law shall willing hearts be governed. The person of Him Who is truth is one with Him Who is love, in the Com-

munion of Him Who is life, and light, and power; and this personal Truth is the Godman. Humanity is in the Godhead, not lost by absorption, but continuing ever distinctive. Hence every partaker of humanity may be lifted, and shall be lifted if only his own godlike free will accords, into such communion with God, that, in all his deepest thought and in all his farthest action, he shall be ever his own free self, doing God's will indeed, and so keeping in harmony with the universe, but doing it by the glad accord of his own will with the will of the Perfect One, Whose essence is love. This intimate communion is what St. Peter means, when he promises to the faithful that they may "be partakers of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4); and St. Paul, when he describes the "new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Eph. iv. 24); and St. John, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God. . . Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (i. 2). These and many other Scriptures set forth that

unique promise of the Gospel — made effectual, when unimpeded, by and through the organic operation of the Incarnation—that we shall be personally united to God, in a communion wherein reciprocal love shall replace law, while we shall do His will in carrying out our own.

One glorious distinction of "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," is, that it is a liberty which shall last forever. If man were finally to be absorbed in God, there would be no human liberty left. Personal distinctiveness, with the consciousness in every being that he is himself and not another, are essential to liberty. Freedom and personality are correlatives. They exist together. Neither can exist apart from the other. Hence the eternal liberty of man is assured. However closely he may be joined to God, his will must remain distinct from that of God. Christ took and retains forever a human will. He became in all respects and will forever remain man. Like Him, the whole number of the saved in Him will retain forever individuality and personality with its consciousness which includes freedom of will. Everlasting and perfect accordance must and shall exist between the will of God and that of

every one who shall be saved; but this accordance will be consciously chosen and free, while the binding link will always be love. Personal union will be embraced by corporate union. The Church will remain the Body of CHRIST, "and all we members in particular." The Church will be everlasting, and remain both the manifestation and the means of the everlasting communion of the Saints. In eternity she will remain, only in perfection, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic—undivided, godly, embracing all, and of unbroken continuity.

To this end the whole labor of the Church has from the beginning tended. The mission of the American Church is to lay hold of and construct her part in the chain of progress. It may be that she is to forge the last link in the chain. Perhaps, in applying the Incarnation to the present age, she may have to give some new explicitness to its definition, which may round out and complete the whole explicit Catholic Faith. At any rate, she has that great fact, in the fulness of the Gospel, especially committed to her. No other era was ever so ripe as the present for its presentation in the fore-front. No other branch of the expanding tree of the One Church in all lands and times has had

such an opportunity as lies around the American Church. She cannot reabsorb herself into the limb from which she grows out. She cannot become Anglican again if she would. She may rejoice in her historic transmission, and glory in the mother that bore her, and exult in the vigor and faithfulness that the dear old English Church displays in her spirit and in her body; but she herself must walk on her own feet, pursue her own way, and act for herself in her own sphere. Let the American Church become conscious of her arrival at the age of maturity, perceive and feel the responsibility and distinctiveness of her calling; then let her face her environment! Who knows but that Christ may make her a polished link in His evolving "truth with power," perhaps give her the honor of joining the two ends of His historic organic truth together, of becoming the final gem in the circlet of His jewels; and so cause her to bear that last great witness to God, which shall finish the mysterious conflict between good and evil, usher in the "consummation," and herald the coming of everlasting peace!

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